THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, the 19th December 1947.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at four of the clock, Mr. President (THE HON. SRI R. B. RAMAKRISHNA RAJU) in the Chair.

[*Note.*—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

DEBATE ON DECONTROL AND DERATIONING.

MR. PRESIDENT :—" We seem to have more visitors than Members to-day ! "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Mr. President, Sir, I am glad that this House has taken such a lively interest in the question of food and has insisted on giving its opinion on this food situation. I have already dealt with that subject in great detail in the Assembly some days ago but it does not mean that I should not say what should be said here and perhaps there are matters which require greater elucidation since I spoke last on it. I want to make one or two points very very clear. The question of decontrol is an all-India concern. It is not as if this Government went into this question by themselves or by any special considerations which have prevailed in this Province as different from the rest. Therefore the first move came from the Government of India. As a piece of information, I might say this that on behalf of the Government of Madras I was one of those who took part in the Food Policy Committee presided over by Sri Purushotamdas Thakurdas and whose recommendations have been finally accepted by the Government of India. In my evidence there, I strongly contended that the food control must continue. But the Government of India for not only one or two reasons but for a multiplicity of reasons were driven to the necessity of decontrolling food and foodgrains. Apart from that, one thing is very clear. This food control was a wartime measure. It was not a normal feature of our Province. We never controlled food before the war. It was an institution controlled for war purposes. Whomsoever it did benefit or did not benefit the fact remains that we are still having control and the control has lasted now for more than two years after the war has closed. It has become almost imperative that this wartime measure should be abandoned some time or other, the sooner the better. Therefore the Government thought it necessary that this food control must go.

" But the fact about food control is this, that while we control food and require it and take it from the producer at a price which is determined by us and not by him and while we secure as much as we want according to certain stipulations which will leave a margin for the producer we have never been giving the producer the fair price that any man should get for his produce. And particularly in the matter of food during those war years it has been

the misfortune of the producers to be producing food for the people at a more or less sacrificial rate. For, the question of the fair price was never taken into consideration. Of course, there were sufficiently weighty reasons as to why a higher price was refused. Financial advisers and pandits have said that the moment you increased the price of foodstuffs which is a very important commodity, naturally it will produce an increase all round in other requirements and necessities and there will be a spiral of increase all round. That is perhaps the fundamental reason why a higher price was not given and even a fair price was not given. The Government were also naturally interested in keeping the commodity prices at a fairly controllable level. All these dearness allowances are based on the commodity prices. Any increase in the commodity prices will also increase the dearness allowances and there will be an enormous drain on the public revenues because we have to pay it according to the rise or fall of the commodity prices. That was the reason given at any rate as far as I am aware by the Government of India with regard to this control of prices of foodstuffs. We on behalf of this Government made very many representations with the Government of India and every time it was turned down with the result that we could not increase the level of prices that were operating for the foodstuffs. We were helpless in this matter. The press and the public and even the platform were almost unanimous with regard to this demand for an increase in the prices of paddy secured. About the fairness of the demand, there is absolutely no doubt. But we were in a way controlled by the Government of India on this food question and with what we were able to do with the Government of India we were not successful in giving a better price to the producer. There perhaps lies the whole trouble, the secret of the trouble. The producer year after year was denied a fair price for his produce while all the implements that are necessary for producing foodgrains rose up tremendously, three times or four times and in some cases even five times or six times. Iron implements, fodder for animals, labour—even wages for the agricultural labourers—went up enormously while the price of foodstuffs stood on at the same level year after year with the result that agriculture became the most unremunerative industry although that is about the premier industry in the Province. But it did not stop there because the prices of cattle went up enormously and the agriculturist could not get it. There was no other relief offered to the producer except that a compulsory levy was made on him demanding a certain quantity of grain, giving him a sustenance margin of foodgrains. He was not allowed to sell, he could not move his produce and poor people could not buy or sell. Things have developed to such an extent that this control without producing the result which it was meant to produce, produced an uncontrollable blackmarketing in foodgrains. Even the carrying of a handful of grain by a worker from one place to another became impossible. He was subjected to the rigour of law. People travelled by trains—not one or two but hundreds, all of them going about—with small headloads (interruption)—even without a ticket—and they had to be apprehended and prosecuted according to the law. The

net result was that most of them when they were apprehended by the mufti Police at the stations—and so on—literally left small little bags which they were carrying in the carriage itself and it has become a daily feature in the Madras City that every train that came into Madras brought in anything like 500 to 800 measures in small headloads which were left for fear of the Police. It simply shows what is happening. In fact, things came to a crisis in the train between Guntur and Bezwada and other places. The trains were literally stopped, chains were pulled and people got into the trains, not at the stations but at every wayside where the train stopped, each carrying a headload of rice or whatever quantity they could carry. Again trains were stopped instantaneously and they all got out with their headloads not in tens but in hundreds and hundreds. It so happened that a poor second-class passenger who was a merchant was handled roughly and he was injured. He had to be taken care of by the Police and carried to the hospital. Because he was travelling without a rifle, people rushed into his compartment and roughly handled him. All that happened simply because of the particular situation created by the controls and the consequent blackmarketing and law-breaking which were created almost inevitably. That is the position and even to-day we are not yet free from the trouble. Two or three days ago news appeared in the papers that a large number of people dropped their headloads of rice and were running away.

"It is easy to say that your Government is inefficient. You ought to have got all those fellows, you must have put them in; there is X or Y who is behind these fellows engaging them in this transport and you must have got at them and therefore you are inefficient and there is no use complaining about the blackmarket. This sort of argument can be easily levelled against the Government in any situation. Here we should not forget that we were dealing with a prime necessity of life and that is food. And yet food control has got to be enforced. Risks were undertaken and people did undertake the risk and began to cheat law. As long as a certain number of people began to cheat the law, they could be controlled but when large masses of people began to cheat the law then the time had come either to change the law or to leave the situation to ease in the natural way. That was the position in Madras and it still continues to-day because we have not removed the control though we have announced the process of decontrolling. This has not commenced in all places. That there are risks with regard to decontrol I quite admit, not that I am unaware of it. But the risk has got to be taken. Decontrol has got to come some time or other. Two years after the war there is no use of continuing the war measures. A certain amount of risk that comes in the wake of decontrol has got to be faced. The Government of India had warned us that in our measures of decontrol we must go step by step and assure ourselves of the consequences of our action. That one caution they gave us. Another caution they gave us was that in the event of the whole thing becoming impossible, we should not hesitate to reintroduce control. That was only the last alternative. There was one more proviso for which we were responsible. We had to fix

a fair price for the grains. The bottom of the whole trouble was we could not give fair price for all these commodities. The agriculturist is entitled to a fair price. What is the fair price? We went into the question. A committee of non-officials considered this question and advised the Food Department. They recommended an extra price of at least one rupee per maund. The Government of India said that they were not going to put any limit to the price and allowed us to fix our own price. We went into the question again and decided that nothing less than Rs. 2 per maund over and above the existing price would be a fair price. That works out to Re. 1–6–0 extra per maund of paddy and Re. 1 extra for millets over the prevailing rates. It is our feeling that we have given as much to the agriculturists by way of fair price as would be consistent with the resources of our people to pay. Some people asked: 'Why not increase the price by Rs. 3 or Rs. 5?' But it would be very unfair. The increase worked out to Re. 0–1–6 for an ordinary Madras measure of rice over the prevailing rates. We do not pay this extra from our pockets but we get it from the consumers.

"Sir, this fair price is a sort of control also. We have fixed it as the maximum price that should prevail with regard to transactions in all foodgrains. It would be penal for a man to sell it at a higher price. That is point No. 2. For every transaction that goes on in the district, this shall be the fair price. If a man asks for more, he will be liable under the law for infringing the order.

"Keeping these factors in view, we next calculated the production in all the districts. We have been calculating it for so many years and it is not at all difficult. In the process of decontrol, the question arose which is the district we should decontrol first and what are the districts which cannot subsist by themselves and which depend for their existence upon the bounty of the other districts? We came to the conclusion that eight districts in this Province were surplus districts. The surpluses were substantial only in about six districts and in the other two districts they were near the margin. In Trichinopoly, South Arcot and Chingleput, we had very little margin. They are self-sifficient, no doubt. The Circars districts including Nellore and Tanjore were good surplus districts. We calculated the requirements of the people of the district at the rate of 1 lb. per head so that we may have an approximate idea of how much could be made available to them. We found that we could get a surplus of nearly 6 to 7 lakhs of tons of rice from these districts with which we could feed the deficit districts. We decided that in those surplus districts procurement at the present rate with all the restrictions shall continue and as soon as our requirements were secured, the rest will be left to themselves. Government will not take one grain more than what it has stipulated as their requirements. In the districts of Tanjore, East Godavari, West Godavari and Kistna, procurement will continue at the enhanced rates and as soon as we get the margin we leave our hands off, procurement is off and control is off in the cities and the villages. The movement of foodgrains in the district is free; there is no restriction, no policing and no offence committed. People can take grain

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from one part of the district to another. (Sri A. Gopalakrishnayya : From what date?) I am coming to that. It is open to the shop-keepers and the merchants to resume their trade and sell the grains at the standard rate. But there is one restriction, namely, that the movement beyond the district is restricted without a transport permit.

" Sir, after having made these calculations and made due provision for the requirements of deficit districts particularly with regard to rice, we have now planned that we should begin somewhere as early as possible. We went into the question of which district shall be decontrolled first. In spite of unexpectedly bad seasons we are having, we had information that the millet crop in the Ceded Districts was fairly good. As most of the people in the Ceded Districts were used to millets, we thought it best to decontrol it first. We have asked the Rayalaseema districts to be decontrolled from the 28th of this month. We do not procure. We do not ask them to give anything for our food. The hon. Member, Mr. Bhima Rao asked what would become of the towns. There will be statutory rationing in municipalities. Provision is made to see that the municipalities are fed either from their own district or from other districts from which food will be moved. With regard to the villages, the rationing system, I must confess, has already failed in most of the areas. In spite of the Government taking away the millets and the foodgrains from them and handing over to them a card, the Government could not give the foodgrains to all the villages according to the quota promised. When once all the grains were exhausted and imports stopped, we had to throw up our hands and say ' blank.' But we find that in spite of these things those villages have tried somehow to get on. The villagers probably paid much heavier price or promised labour or did something and they were able to get on, even in places where we had failed, till famine conditions supervened, as in parts of Tinnevelly district where we are taking famine relief measures to control the situation. In all those areas where rural rationing failed, although to a certain extent we were able to give 2 ounces and 3 ounces as often as we were able to get rice we did not fulfil our obligations to those unfortunate people because we could not do so. It is this position that convinced me at any rate of the rightness of the step we took in decontrolling these districts. The rest of the deficit districts will be decontrolled from the 28th of this month. All the Circars districts will be decontrolled from the 4th of next month. All the southern surplus districts will be decontrolled from the 1st February. These dates are so arranged . . . "

MR. PRESIDENT :—" May I request the Hon. Minister to give the dates again? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" This has been done already in the Rayalaseema districts. With regard to the deficit districts, it will be from the 28th of this month. With regard to the surplus districts, in the Northern Circars, it will commence on the 4th of next month. The surplus districts in the south will be decontrolled on the 1st of February next when we expect the harvest. We have

fixed these dates to enable the Government to get from the harvested grain the quota required by them, so that it may be accumulated in various places and rushed to places where they are required. It is to provide ourselves with this surplus that we have started doing this. (An hon. Member: Malabar?) We are not decontrolling Malabar at all on account of its peculiar conditions. There will be rural rationing in Malabar."

AN HON. MEMBER :—" What about South Kanara? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" South Kanara is a deficit district and there too rural rationing will go from the 28th of this month."

ANOTHER HON. MEMBER :—" What about Vizagapatam? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" It is also a deficit district, Sir.

" Therefore, Sir, I have so far informed the House the various steps which we have proposed to take in the decontrol procedure and we expect that this sort of procurement and rationing will go in some districts of the Province towards the middle of May or June, by which time we expect the new harvest would have been finished and by October, we expect that the whole Province will be thoroughly decontrolled and then the responsibility of the Government will cease in the matter of feeding the people of the Province, as has been done till now.

" Then the question will be asked, ' what is it that you are going to do afterwards? You have trained us to this sort of rationing and spoon-feeding and if you are going to withdraw your support now, what will happen? ' My reply is ' What did happen to us before we had control and rationing? '. There was not this sort of control or procurement before 1945, and this was launched in this Province only late in 1945 and early in 1946. What happened before 1945 was, we had a surplus of 1½ lakhs of tons of rice in the Province, which we could export to Ceylon and other places. We were utilizing that surplus within the Province and we were thus able to get on for some time. Then the question may be asked, why do not we have surplus now? "

SRI K. MANATHUNAINATHA DESIGAR :—" On a point of information, Mr. President, did we export any foodgrains to Ceylon in 1944? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I am sorry, it was in the year 1942–43 that we had an exportable surplus, which we exported to Ceylon and other countries. What I want to say is, that prior to the introduction of procurement and rationing, we had a reserve of 1½ lakhs tons of foodgrains, which was our exportable surplus, by which we were able to tide over for some months, but now such a reserve could not be had, because we have taken away all the surplus from the ryots. The position therefore is different to-day.

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"There is also this point that we must consider now. As I said at the beginning, the Government of India hitherto held themselves responsible for the control and distribution of foodgrains throughout the country and during all these years they have been doing their best to feed the people of the country. They purchased foodgrains in all countries of the world wherever foodgrains were available, from Argentina, from the United States, from Canada, from Australia and so on and brought them here and distributed them to the various provinces at their purchase price. The freight and other incidental expenses were all borne by the Government and the consumer was asked to pay only the controlled price. Thus the responsibility of the Government of India has been very great all these years and this has ultimately resulted in the breakdown of their finances. That is the position, Sir, of the Government of India."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—"May I know, how much the Government of India would have spent by way of procurement and distribution, Sir?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—"I do not know, Sir, the exact figure of the amount spent by the Government of India in this respect, but what I have learnt through my talks and conferences with them is, that they have spent nearly 300 crores of rupees in these 3½ years. We, on our part, had also spent between Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 crores year after year. On account of this heavy financial commitments, both by the Government of India and the Provincial Governments, the financial equilibrium of the country was threatening to break, and our currency position was upset. We cannot therefore go on buying foodgrains in foreign markets without the necessary backing of dollar exchange. With the limited amount of dollar exchange that was made available to them, the Government of India have been able to buy only the food requirements for this country and nothing else. What is the result? They could not import anything else into this country which are so vitally needed for our nation-building schemes. For instance, they could not purchase the capital machinery that is required for the industrial development of the country. All their post-war industrial development schemes had to be put off simply because this recurring bugbear of the food problem was constantly before their eyes. They have now said, 'It is high time that we absolve ourselves of this very heavy responsiblity of feeding the people of the country.'

"Sir, so far as we are concerned, we have no concern with foreign markets. Madras cannot now trade either with America, or Argentina or with Burma or with any other countries of the world. If at all we want to trade with other countries, it can be done only through the Government of India. We have to get their permission to have dealings with foreign countries and therefore we have really to go along with the Government of India in regard to these transactions.

"The Government of India have now said that they have not got the necessary facilities to compete with others in international

markets and therefore they could not undertake the responsibility of feeding the people of the country. The next alternative for us therefore is to produce the maximum amount of foodgrains that could be grown in this Province.

" The Government of India, did not leave us at that stage. They have however offered to come to our relief, by conserving a certain stock of foodgrains in their reserve, which they have calculated as 2 million tons, and which they are prepared to distribute to the Provinces in times of emergency or deficit, if demand is made on them. They have also acceded to our request to give us freedom to offer better prices for foodgrains in order to enable us to procure as much as we can and to encourage the agriculturists to grow more food. Whether such facilities will result in a substantial increase of foodgrains is a matter for separate discussion, but that we are giving a good lot of money and other facilities to the ryots is a fact which cannot be disputed. For instance, take the number of wells that have been dug, for which we have advanced money. I believe that thousands of wells must have been dug. Then take the amount we have spent by way of distributing manure and other agricultural implements to the agriculturists. In this way, we have tried to increase food production and adjust our food economy to the best possible extent."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" How much are the Government of India going to give this year? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I am not quite sure about my figures, Sir, but my own feeling is that we are entitled to Rs. 6½ crores this year by way of subsidy and apart from that they have promised to give us foodgrains from their reserve stock to the extent of 2 lakhs of tons for the next few months.

" With regard to the price, the Government of India have given us 8 annas extra. If we get one maund of paddy, the Government of India give us 8 annas and that sum of 8 annas is intended to be utilized for increased production of foodgrains, either by giving it to the ryots in the form of manure or other facilities. This is more or less in the nature of a subsidy. We pass it on to the ryots, not in cash, but in some other form."

SRI K. MANATHUNAINATHA DESIGAR :—" On a point of information, Mr. President, may I know how the Government is going to distribute this 8 annas among the producers and may I hope that an announcement to that effect will be made early enough? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" There is no question of any announcement at all, because this is given by the Government of India to the Madras Government for the procurement made. As I said just now, the ryots will not get anything in the shape of money. We will inform the Government of India how much we have procured and they will pay us the subsidy at the rate of 8 annas per maund procured. The ryots will get the advantage of it only in the form of manure by which to increase their production. It has nothing to do with the increased price we have announced for paddy or millets."

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SRI K. MANATHUNAINATHA DESIGAR :—" Suppose it is merged in the Tungabhadra project? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" There is no question of merging it with anything at all. That project is not a matter under discussion."

SRI T. PURUSHOTAM :—" Will it be spent for immediate production, or will it be utilized for a long-term scheme? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Our objective is to produce more foodgrains immediately. This is exactly the advice of the Government of India and it is what we are going to do.

" Then Sir, it is unfortunate that this year the monsoon has failed and therefore this Government has been faced with a tremendous responsibility in undertaking decontrol now. We are apprehending that famine will take place in certain areas in the Province temporarily and we have asked the Commissioner of Civil Supplies to tour round the Province and report the conditions. We have also asked the Collectors concerned to start famine relief works in the affected areas. We have a special fund for the purpose and we will utilize it to give relief to the people affected in the famine areas."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" Will relief commence from the 1st of next month, Sir?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The Collectors have been instructed in the matter and they will do the needful. It is not a question from which date relief will be given. It will be done in the usual course. That is the position, Sir, at present. What we should do is to get as much as possible without straining the generosity or goodwill of the surplus districts, particularly in view of the fact that we are going to face famine conditions this year. Our procurement was good last year because the producers responded in a very generous measure in spite of the poor price we offered and thus we have been able to tide over till this day. Now we have got a little over one lakh of tons of stock and this will keep us for six weeks more. By that time the new harvest will come into being and we will be able to tide over this crisis, if the producers and ryots also help us as they have done before.

" With regard to the particular question how we are going to tide over the famine conditions which are threatening us this year, I shall deal with it later in my reply after hearing the criticisms of hon. Members. But in the meantime my purpose is served by placing before the House the whole scheme as adumbrated by us in the process of decontrol and any advice or guidance that hon. Members would like to give us will be welcomed with pleasure, and we shall do what we possibly can to tide over the crisis. Wherever you have difficulties, you may express them clearly, and I shall see how much of them could be rectified; but let it be understood that in all these stages of work we want the full co-operation of all people in this Province, and without that co-operation, nothing can be done. If we do not want the tyrannies of procurement and all the trouble consequent upon it, it

comes to this : that our people should in a generous measure come to our relief in the enforcement of the law. Because, as I have said in the beginning, control will have to be reintroduced if the whole scheme fails and we will have to get on with it—for how long I do not know—till the stage arrives when we will be more than self-sufficient with regard to our foodgrains. I am at the same time somehow feeling confident that we might be able to carry on for some time, and it is with that hope that we have devised this scheme of decontrol; the other House discussed this scheme and I was agreeably pleased to note that the majority of the House accepted it except for the few doubts which had to be cleared and supported the scheme which we put forward. I am sure this House also will come to the same conclusion after a debate; still I look forward for any substantial help that may be given to me in the discharge of this very onerous task."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" This is only with regard to rice? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" All others go."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" Is there any hope of getting rice from Burma? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" As I told you in the beginning, we cannot get anything from any other country except through the Government of India, and therefore, if there is rice in Burma, it goes into the International pool, the South-East Asia pool that has been formed by the International Federation, and India has to be allotted a certain quota out of it. It is not as if we could get anything from Burma merchants into this country as in the pre-war days. It is not possible also to do that till perhaps better conditions prevail. To-day we cannot get a single grain from beyond the shores of India without the co-operation of the Government of India who, in their turn, are a member of the International Federation which controls the food policy of the world."

SRI B. NARAYANASWAMI NAYUDU :—" May I know whether it will be possible to give procurement figures for each district? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Roughly the total amount comes to a little over 6 lakhs, say about 6½ lakhs. I can give you all the figures districtwar if you will give me time."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" You have given certain figures in your printed speech; are they all correct? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" No printed speech this time; I think it was given some three months ago. Present conditions are quite different."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Just one point; I suppose you said that control disappears in the deficit districts on the 28th of this month. That means the procurement also goes off? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Yes."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" What about the surplus districts? "

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THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The present system will continue in an intensified form, if you like it."

SRI M. D. T. KUMARASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" May I know if there is difficulty for the merchants to get permits from the Government of India? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" They won't get anything at all without the Provincial Government coming into the picture."

SRI M. D. T. KUMARASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" Then again, there will be difficulty if merchants are not allowed to get foodgrains from outside? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" They cannot get it to-day; they cannot get it until the whole control of the International Federation goes."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Just another point. In the deficit districts, after decontrol, you hope to supply what is required, over and above the local production."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Yes, to the statutory areas."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" How do you supply? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" We will simply take it from the surplus districts and give it to the concerned areas."

(Sri B. Bhima Rao rose in his seat.)

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Kindly allow me to finish. I just want to make it clear. All this decontrol and derationing machinery will disappear in the deficit districts? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Yes by the end of the year I expect it."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" How do you distribute your grain then, through what agency? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" For the statutory areas, we have the same agency continuing."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Even in the deficit districts? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Yes; complete decontrol of only rural rationing."

SRI M. D. T. KUMARASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" Then what will the villagers do to get their rations? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" They must produce; they cannot go to the ration shops. Our idea with regard to the surplus districts is to decontrol the whole lot."

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" Is it a fact that there is going to be a deficit of a million tons in our province on account of the threatened famine? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Exactly so, but it is a matter of what might or might not happen. The Director of

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Agriculture has estimated it as a million tons; but what is going to happen at the end we do not know. If there is a deficit, whether that will be met by the Government of India, or whether on account of a few showers that might come in between, there will be any improvement—all that cannot be said now. We are aware there is a threat of a deficit, but we must leave it to the future."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Mr. John will agree to five minutes for every member? "

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Allright, Sir."

SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—" Sir, I want some detailed information about the decontrolling and derationing of foodgrains in the rural areas of the Ceded districts, the Royalaseema districts. From the report of the speech made in the Assembly published in the newspapers, I remember the Hon. Dr. Rajan stated that both in the urban and rural areas, people will be able to get their foodgrains, but I find now a distinction is made. I want to know definitely whether decontrol and derationing are only with regard to rural areas in the surplus districts. ' Rural areas ' is not defined. We have three municipalities in the Bellary district."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" You may take it that in all municipal areas, there will be statutory rationing; but with regard to taluks and village areas, we do not bind ourselves to rationing."

SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—" I am glad he has given this information. That is only with regard to rice. But in the three municipal areas in the Bellary district, there are several millet-eaters. You may take it roughly that 50 per cent of the population of Bellary are millet-eaters. How do you supply them with millets if you give up procurement in the villages? How do you supply millets to the millet-eaters in the statutory rationed areas? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The idea is not to make these millet-eaters go to ration shops at all. The present millet procurement, as far as we know, is absolutely little or nothing at all. In fact, what we procured last year is 5 per cent of the whole produce. It is not as if we have now all the millet-eaters clamouring for it. What we have provided for in the Royalaseema area is this : Millets are available there, but Government do not propose to provide millets to anybody; they are however prepared to give rice which is not produced in that area, especially in municipal areas where no production is possible."

SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—" So, in the municipal areas . . . ."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" Sir, the Hon. Minister is not a witness in the box to be cross-examined like this; the hon. Member may refer to all his points and the Hon. Minister may note them down and answer them at the end."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Because the gentleman wanted to know a certain point of fact, I thought I might give him the reply at once, in order to enable him to make his speech."

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* SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—" Sir, no doubt the Minister may consider and issue a press-note tomorrow or give the information afterwards. I did not want to cross-examine him, as my hon. Friend Mr. Suryanarayana Rao suggested. I want definite information. Millet-eaters in municipal areas are prepared to get it from the neighbouring villages at their own cost. There is one rule in the Madras Rationing Order, dated 16th September 1947, that no person other than authorized wholesale distributors shall, on or after the ration date, import into or export outside any rationed area any rationed article except in accordance with the provisions made by the Provincial Government, etc. After the Hon. Minister made his speech in the Legislative Assembly on the 15th instant, what has happened is that several labourers who got their wages in kind were caught; I could not intercede in the face of this provision; but when I represented to the Collector, he said he had no discretion to stop the prosecution. So, if it is your object to say that everything except rice will be derationed and decontrolled, I will be satisfied. It is better that is mentioned on the floor of this House or is made clear by means of a press communique because I think even the district authorities are not aware of the details.

" Then, Sir, with regard to the procurement of rice, I want to submit one point to the Hon. Minister. In the confidential note sent to us in September, there is one observation that people in rationed areas in the other provinces would go out to the non-rationed areas and buy what they can afford to, specially because producers are not rationed. So, I put a question to the Hon. Minister outside the Chamber: I am in Bellary, my stock of rice runs out by Friday every week. That is the complaint of every lawyer and in fact of every citizen both in the Madras City and elsewhere, and that is why we hear of so many people bringing rice in baskets. Hence, we need some more rice. Could we get it from the non-rationed areas to Bellary? Of course, we have got—some of us have got—lands and can get our own rice and we can also ask some of our friends who have got lands to give us some rice. Could we secure such rice from Hospet and other areas in order to supplement our rations? Because, I find, Sir, from the statistics given in May last, that Bellary was given the lowest amount. Of course Malabar seems to be the favourite district. It gets twenty-five per cent of the rice that we have in this Province and Bellary seems to be the most unfortunate district from every point of view. So, I am asking whether we could have this privilege extended to us. According to the confidential note which was sent to us before September, I know that Bellary is supplied the least quantity. So, we want the Hon. the Food Minister to consider this request and to give an answer. We want the Hon. Minister to give us an assurance about these things so that we may not be in any doubt about this decontrol."

* SRI K. MANATHUNAINATHA DESIGAR :—" Mr. President, Sir, the immediate cause for the Government to revise their policy seems to be the Government of India's advice to the provinces to revise their food control policy in the direction of progressive decontrol. Sir, the Central Government's decision seems

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to be based on the recommendations of the Foodgrains Policy Committee, which were not unanimous, and on the discussions held at the conference of the Food Ministers of the Provinces, in which also there was no unanimity. They say even the above decision was reached not without hesitation. They have cautiously left the manner of implementation, and the onus of formulating precise measures in pursuance of the policy to the Provinces. They have stated also the revised policy is based on the expectation that more stock will become available freely; and if there is disappointment, the consequences will be extremely serious.

" In pursuance of the above, the Madras Government have lifted control in the Ceded Districts, and now I understand from the Hon. the Food Minister that he is going to decontrol and abolish all rural rationing in deficit districts in the course of six or eight days and that rural rationing will be abolished in all rural areas and deficit districts except Malabar and that it will be abolished in surplus districts in the month of January and in the month of February partially.

" Sir, I wish to point out that the transition period should be designed, not with the object of securing the most expeditious return to pre-war conditions, but with that of evolving a system of regulation of prices in normal times. This period may be regarded as commencing with the arrival of shipments of rice from Burma, Siam and Indo-China in appreciable quantities. I am glad to note what the Food Minister has stated, that the Government have realized that a policy of ' Laissez Faire " cannot be pursued. This is not a problem to be solved by any simple rule of three. It is a question of the psychology of thousands of producers, traders, and consumers. The life of the community depends on the producer, who has a surplus, placing on the market more quickly than in normal times all his excess produce. Difficult problems are bound to arise in the process of relaxation of the existing controls. The return to normal conditions must be gradual and regulated. Unless it is planned and prepared for in advance, the happenings of loss of life, etc., that happened in Bengal and in Malabar in 1943 may be repeated.

" With the shortage of imports from abroad and the failure of the monsoon, is it safe to experiment the decontrol in deficit areas? Food controls should be treated differently from controls on cloth, cement, etc. In the deficit districts, the large number of non-producers should be fed, besides small producers who should be supplied during those months in the year in which they cannot live on their own produce. If free trade is allowed in these districts, can these people be sure of their supplies at the controlled rates? How many of our producers have realized that the surplus of food grown by them, should, after their needs have been satisfied, be regarded as the property of the community, for which they are entitled only to a reasonable return? Where is the guarantee that grains procured in the surplus areas of a deficit district will not go in the blackmarket, and will be available for distribution at controlled rates in the deficit areas of the deficit districts?

"If there has been support for the revised policy, it is not because the people are against the planned economy of control and rationing, but because there were flaws in the machinery of control, tyranny in procurement and inefficiency and default in distribution, not to speak of corruption that existed in all stages. I wish to differ from the Food Minister when he says that the people did not have much incentive to produce more because they enjoyed a certain sense of security regarding their food supply under rationing. I like to urge strongly therefore that in the heavily deficit districts at least, the system of monopoly purchase and distribution should not be given up, till the supply position is assured by imports from other countries. It has been decided by the Hon. the Food Minister to give up this system from the 28th December because the supply position would become easier afterwards. My hon. Colleague, Mr. M. D. T. Kumaraswami Mudaliyar, was anxious that an assurance should be given whether imports will be permitted from Burma and whether merchants will be free to import foodgrains from foreign countries."

MR. PRESIDENT :—"May I know from the hon. Member how many more pages he has got to read still?"

* SRI K. MANATHUNAINATHA DESIGAR :—"It has been happening and it has been allowed in the Council and it is not the first time."

MR. PRESIDENT :—"Just to know the time which the hon. Member may still require."

* * SRI K. MANATHUNAINATHA DESIGAR :—"I am finishing, Sir. The Hon. the Food Minister says that control is a war measure. Though the war was over, war conditions still remain. Scarcity is there. There is no import from foreign countries. We have not reverted to pre-war conditions. So, it is just and reasonable that we stick on to war-time measures. The Hon. the Food Minister just now said that the Government of India are relieving themselves of their obligations to supply us with imported grains at the rates prevailing in our Province and that just as they were doing, we should also relieve ourselves from the obligation to supply food to the people in the deficit areas as far as possible. Sir, I say it is not a right principle. I wish to support the Government but, in all earnestness, I must say that they are embarking on a risky policy just now on the eve when the food supply has broken down in all deficit districts."

* SRI D. KRISHNAMURTHI :—"Mr. President, Sir, the Government have placed before the House a very lucid, reasonable and exhaustive statement. The Government have stated that they wish to bring about a progressive decontrol of foodstuffs in the various areas. They have also stated that they will not hesitate to re-introduce control and rationing at any time if they find that stocks are hoarded and people are put to difficulties. No man can arrive at conclusions about the foodgrain control in imaginary circumstances and nobody can convince us about the logic of this decontrol of foodstuffs at this stage. It is something like telling

a man to learn swimming without getting into the water. Only if he gets into the water, he can learn swimming or even be drowned.

" Sir, we are perfectly familiar with the food situation in the Province which has been carefully planned during a crisis which speaks well of the calculative capacity of the Madras Government. They have striven by all methods to see that no breakdown of rationing happens in this Province. Last year we have passed through a very anxious period and through calculation and watchfulness, we have tided over it. It is due to the assiduous efforts of the Government and the Food Department, that we have been able to avert a calamity like the one we had in Bengal a few years back. Now, Government want to dethrone control and dethrone rationing and they say they are trying an experiment now. It is something like counting on a pack of cards with an imaginary trump card. The trump may be useful in cutting but it may prove an imaginary cutting in these matters. So, we must give the Government sufficient strength and support to see that the experiment that they are to embark upon is given a fair trial so that people may not be affected by the changed policy. Arguments may be multiplied by every side with sufficiently good reasons, but when it comes to the actual working, we must come to a decision whether the abolition of control and rationing would benefit the people. It may be perfectly clear at this stage that the Government want to try this experiment to see whether it would benefit the people. The Government of India had already come to a decision to introduce decontrol and derationing and thus have given a very great momentum, strength and support to our Government. This policy is also due to the advice of the undisputed Leader of India Mahathma Gandhi, who has been saying day in and day out in his prayer meetings that the controls should be removed. Everything he has said before has proved true. Well, he is a seer; he is a Prophet. How far his prophecy and calculation would prove beneficial in this particular case is a matter which should be left for time and test. So, I do not think there is any reason for hon. Members to attack this Government on this changed policy, because afer all, they are only trying an experiment. I would, therefore, request the Government to try this experiment in a limited area and to see how this decontrol is working, whether it would give rise to greater complications and trouble or whether it would be a step in the right direction, which would encourage decontrol and derationing in the other areas. With these words, I heartily support the policy and programme of the Government and I wish the Government every success. I am one with the Government in their object that this new experiment should benefit one and all."

* DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Mr. President, Sir, this House is deeply obliged to the Hon. the Minister for Food for giving us information on this very important subject and also asking us for our criticisms and suggestions. Sir, the Government must be congratulated on the successful management of these controls up to

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this time. Rationing has been very very successful and it has been very very regular and it is our belief that decontrol also will be successful, for, at the end of all these controls is decontrol. I am very pleased to see that in decontrolling, they are going very cautiously. We are anxious and all that the public are anxious, perhaps, about this decontrol but I have every hope that the Government will be able to decontrol in such a way that there will be no breakdown. With these preliminary remarks, I want to give one or two suggestions on the food policy of the Government.

" Sir, the Minister said that he will control the prices. I would also urge upon him to make merchants and producers know that not only prices will be controlled but also that it will be made an offence if any person having grains refuses to sell them. Sir, during war time there was a measure, as you know, which not only controlled the prices of foodstuffs but also other things which were manufactured in this country and which were imported. It was also an offence if the goods were not sold when they were available. Similarly, I want the Hon. the Food Minister to introduce not only control of prices but also to make it an offence for any person not selling these foodstuffs, when they are available with him for sale. Having said this, Sir, I should say that personally I am not very satisfied with the steps taken by the Government in stepping up production. We have had no figures yet as to how much of land in this Province is cultivable but not cultivated, how much land could be cultivated more intensively, for instance, how much land could be made to yield double crops where it is yielding only one crop now. I think the Government ought to give us figures village by village, taluk by taluk and district by district, every half year or every quarter to show that more and more land is brought under cultivation. Again, they should also tell us what assistance, Government are giving the ryots to step up production. I agree with the Hon. the Food Minister that there is need to give a more reasonable price to the ryot, so that the ryot may be given an incentive to produce more. But, that is not enough. Many other things are required. I suggest to the Hon. the Minister for Food to place before us from time to time figures of food production in this Province."

* SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" Mr. President, Sir, I am so sorry that we all became parties for time-limit, but still, Sir, within the time kindly allotted to me, I shall say a few words on the food policy, especially with reference to the figures about which the Hon. Food Minister seems to be very touchy, because something appeared in the papers."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The hon. Member himself said about these figures and I was interested in knowing that. That is all."

* SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" True, as stated by the Hon. Minister this is an all-India question. But may I ask whether a Provincial Government is bound to carry out the policy of the Government of India if there are special circumstances

which prevent them from giving effect to the policy of the Government of India? Is there not the instance of the State of Mysore, which proposes to continue the present system of control and rationing, because Mysore is a deficit State? I am surprised—I must say I should congratulate the Hon. Food Minister—because once he contended before the Food Policy Committee that food controls must continue and equally strongly be maintains to-day that food control should go. Perhaps, Sir, no lawyer would have done better go. Perhaps, Sir, no lawyer would have done better than what he than what he has done, but still I feel, that this quoting of the Government of India—because they lay down a certain policy and ask the Provinces and States to adopt that to suit their circumstances—does not necessarily mean that every Province or State must fall in line with their policy.

"Then, Sir, the Hon. Minister for Food stated that black-marketing has been rampant and that offences against food laws are growing. But may I ask, Sir, are not prohibition offences also increasing in number and on that account are you prepared to abolish prohibition as some people are asking? There are no doubt law-breakers in every society and simply because the law is broken, that is no reason why a good law should be abolished altogether, but it should be rigorously enforced if it is in the interests of the community. If controls are considered good by the Government, let them enforce them. But simply because some offences have been committed by certain citizens, we cannot quote that as an instance or as an argument for doing away with controls.

"Sir, the Hon. Food Minister said that the Government of India are going to build up a reserve of one million or two million tons. May I invite his attention to the Government of India statement. All that they propose to do is to create a reserve of five lakhs and step up to ten lakhs and they have made it quite clear that the Provinces should not expect anything more than what is called an import quota. What the import quota that Madras expects is not mentioned in their resolution. The Policy Committee Report—the Purushottamdas Committee—puts it down at 150,000 tons, but that will be available only if the surplus Provinces are able to procure. If the reserve of the Government of India is put at 10 lakhs only—the maximum that is put down here—how can the Government of India come to the help of our Province with more than 150,000 tons? I want to impress this point, because the Government of India do expect us to look after ourselves. That is the policy they have laid down. If we have to look after ourselves, are our resources sufficient to remove control and rationing? This is the point to be considered.

"Last year, Sir, when the Hon. Minister for Food came forward with his food statement, he said that procurement was deficient, imports were deficient and so he was forced to cut down the ration to 8 oz. and that we must all kindly put up with it. But, have the procurement figures improved during these months and have the imports increased and how has the situation changed for the better, to give up rationing and control? The figures show that procurement is going down.

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"Then, Sir, for want of time I do not want to go at length but would only refer to the figures to which I referred yesterday. In the course of the debate in the Assembly, the Hon. Minister for Food took up the production figures for 1945–46 and 1946–47 and allotted 12 oz., 10 oz. and 8 oz. of ration and stated that if these ounces of food are given then we will have surpluses. But, Sir, may I point out to him that 12 oz. is not the ration at which we aim. Sir, it is creating a wrong impression of our resources that if we are given 12 oz. there will be a surplus. If you read the figures of the normal consumption in this Province per capita, it is 24 oz. of rice and 28 oz. of millets. Our ambition should be to reach that target. He says that 12 oz. is the limit—not even 1 lb. which the producer was allowed and in arriving at these figures the Hon. Minister has taken the producers and non-producers all together and says that for a population of 433 lakhs the production is so much and so there will be a surplus. Sir, I only take objection to the use of these figures. He is misleading when he says that we will have a surplus and that 12 oz. is the limit at which we should stop, when 24 oz. of rice and 28 oz. of millet should be the normal food per capita. That is why I said, it looked as though these figures give us a rosy picture, but the picture is far more gloomy than it was when the Hon. Food Minister placed the food statement some months ago. That is all the point I wanted to make about the figures. Not that I question the figures, but the deductions drawn from those figures are misleading. Our target should be 24 oz. of rice and 28 oz. of millets per capita consumption and from that point of view we should examine how best to increase our resources now that the Government of India have asked us to rely on ourselves, and how best to adjust the limited reserves we have so that there may be an equitable distribution. And, Sir, what is rationing? Rationing comes in only when there is scarcity and so there should be an equitable distribution of available things so that all may get at least something—otherwise some may get more and most others may not get anything at all. That is the only point about figures, Sir.

"My hon. Friend, Mr. Bhima Rao raised a very pertinent point. The Press Note given to us says that there will be practically no rationing and control in all the four districts. It is news to us to be told to-day that statutory rationing will continue in certain areas. That only means informal rationing in rural areas has been abandoned. I wish, Sir, that had been made clear in the statement. This is a very important subject and I do not know what made the Hon. Food Minister believe that our districts have had a normal harvest. Sir, our north-east monsoon has also failed this year and our millets are grown both during the north-east monsoon as well as the south-west monsoon. I wish, Sir, the Hon. Minister had quoted figures to show that the crop is normal at least. What is the normal figure so far as our districts are concerned? Here, I would like to quote the normal figures of production. In the Kurnool district, it is 126,000 tons of cholam but in 1945–46 it was 95,110 tons. Take Bellary, it used to be 100,100 tons, but it was 56,500 tons in 1945–46. Take again

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Anantapur, it used to be 46,600 tons, it was 24,550 tons. Cuddapah which used to produce 65,200 tons produced only 48,550 tons in 1945–46. Unfortunately, I have no figures for 1946–47. I want the Hon. Minister for Food to tell me whether this year's yield can be taken as the normal. In that case, I vote with him to remove informal rationing, but I would ask him, have we reached the period of normalcy in those districts? Are you not handing over those unfortunate labourers into the hands of the rich land-owners? They are to be at the mercy of the rich to get even a little grain. I would have liked if the Hon. Minister had said—as he once thought of it—that he will open fair price shops so that everybody in that area may get what he wanted and that these shops would act as a check on the propensities of trade. First of all, Sir, normal production has not been reached. I remember to have read the Hon. Food Minister saying somewhere that the Ceded districts want to be left to themselves and we shall allow it. Who asked him that they should be left to themselves? Has he taken a referendum in our districts? Have the poor been consulted? I do not mind if the figures at least justify there is normal production of millets in that area. Remember, Sir, only one season is over and the next season crop has not yet come—and the next season is as bad there as it is here and elsewhere. I wish, Sir, the Hon. Minister had waited till the next season was over. I foretell him to-day—though many of the representatives of my district may not join me—that famine conditions are sure to prevail in April as usual every year if the north-east monsoon fails. If Tinnevelly is suffering to-day on account of famine, the Ceded districts, unless the season improves—not that I wish for famine in my district, because we have suffered enough—we are bound to suffer if this policy is to be adopted. I do not know why our four deficit districts where millet position has not reached the normal figure, have been chosen for decontrol and derationing. I do not know if the Hon. Minister had quoted figures to show what the production was even for the first crop. I receive letters to say that rains have failed; in certain villages even during the south-west monsoon the crops were not normal and in some places rains came after the period and spoiled the crop. I want to know whether the figures in the possession of the Government entitle them to say that normal conditions prevail in those four districts. That is all my question and I am not concerned as regards the surplus districts . . . "

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The hon. Member has exceeded the time and I hope he will close his speech."

* SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" I have only one more point to say. What is the method of procurement the Hon. Minister is going to follow in the surplus districts? Is it by what they call the compulsory levy or monopoly-purchase? Will he allow others also to purchase or will the Government be the only purchaser in the surplus districts? I would like him to give an answer, because the fate of the deficit districts depends upon the methods of procurement to be followed in the surplus districts. If the producers—I do not mean to say that all the producers will come

forward with their surplus grains—put all their surplus grain into the stores they may build, well and good. I am sure the Government are mistaken in this. Some amount of compulsion is absolutely necessary, as I quoted from the Report of the Bengal Famine Commission, and is the Hon. Minister prepared to use all the methods necessary in order to get the surplus grain to meet the needs of the deficit districts? Of course, I do not want the surplus districts to be deprived of their requirements. I am so sorry, Sir, that the time-limit has prevented me from referring to a few more points."

MR. PRESIDENT :—"The hon. Member would have had more time if the debate had gone on yesterday!."

SRI A. GOVINDACHARYULU :—"Mr. President, Sir, I strongly express my rejoicings at the decontrol policy announced by hon. Friend Dr. Rajan, the Food Minister. I heartily congratulate the Madras Government for having obeyed or rather respected the great word, the message of the great son and sage of India. As you know, Sir, from the beginning of our Council meeting, I have been urging and urging for the decontrol and the abolishing of rationing and all sorts of controls. I say that, Sir, on facts and figures. I have many a time quoted certain facts and figures to show that there is no need for controls or this sort of . . ."

MR. PRESIDENT :—"Those facts are not necessary now because they are decontrolling."

SRI A. GOVINDACHARYULU :—"Sir, the facts and figures quoted by my learned friend Mr. Suryanarayana Rao need not alarm us at all for there is plenty in the land. What happened to Mr. Suryanarayana Rao and his friends prior to the war? He says that a certain amount of coercion has to be there for procurement. What sort of coercion was there prior to war in the deficit districts? Nothing. Did they suffer. No. Even now on account of the rationing system nobody suffers. Anybody is getting the 24 ounces which my friend wanted to eat either by way of blackmarketing or purchasing it by some other means circumventing the law. That is the position to which we have degenerated on account of the policy of controls. What the Government of India want to do is to save us from that degeneration, from that immoral way, and to make us eat our own food when there is plenty in the land. So, Sir, we need not worry at all about that.

"Now, Sir, I only complain against this unnecessary caution of step by step abolition of rationing. Anyhow within a fortnight, we are going to be freed from the rationing devil. I do not mind the few days. I want to know one thing from the Food Minister. He said that procurement will go on in the surplus districts. May I know, Sir, whether this procurement would be to the target fixed by the Government and whether it will be completed before the rationing is over. If so, that amounts to this. The whole surplus from the district will be drained at the rate fixed by the rationing scheme and the surplus districts will be left naked

without any surplus. (An hon. Member: Cloth will be supplied to them to be clothed!) For this 8 ozs. rationing certain target figures were fixed for procurement in the circars and our learned Food Minister said in his speech that the procurement will be enforced, if need be by the bayonet. What I want to know is if the whole procurement would mean that a target figure should be secured before the rationing is over then what will be left in the Circars? (An hon. Member: Yourself!) (Laughter.) Decontrol means absolutely nothing for the Circar districts. That is one point.

"Another thing is this. Some rates are fixed for procurement. When I looked into the figures supplied to us I found that the rates now fixed by the Food Department for Circars are less than those fixed for the Tanjore district. (Interruption.) Am I wrong? (An hon. Member: More or less.) How does that happen. Before the present fixation took place, I find that there were some 5 annas or so more for the Circars and it was less for Tanjore. Now the reverse is found to be the case so far as I can judge. That is what I wanted to know from the Food Minister at the beginning. If I am correct it will amount to a drain of 25 lakhs of rupees from the Circars. (Sri B. Narayanaswami Nayudu: Nearly a crore.) I take it, Sir, only at 4 annas less. (Interruption.) The Hon. Minister may challenge us. So I put it moderately thinking over the matter. Therefore, the drain amounts to some 25 lakhs of rupees every year and it has been going on ever since the rates were fixed. I am sure, Sir, that nobody can question me about the calculation regarding the drain of Rs. 25 lakhs from the Circars for about 5 lakhs of tons of rice that is exported from the Circar districts. So, Sir, I would like some enlightenment from the Food Minister on that point.

"Along with this abolition of food controls and rationing, I would like that all controls should be abolished forthwith and the Civil Supplies Department and the Food Department may be abolished as early as possible. (Laughter.) (Interruption.) Along with this decontrol, I would request the Government to take up the abolition of all other rations on consumer goods and other articles and I look to that day when they will be able to abolish the Civil Supplies Department and the Food Department altogether and spend that money on better purposes."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"At any rate, I am not prepared to decontrol speeches!"

SRI A. GOVINDACHARYULU:—"Thank you, Sir."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN:—"Mr. President, within the limited time at my disposal, I propose to refer to only one aspect of the present food situation which to my mind is the most important thing, I refer to the famine, Sir. I listened to the speech of the Hon. the Food Minister and I was rather disappointed to find that he did not mention much about the famine. He did not mention what steps have been taken, how far the famine has advanced, how many people have died, how many are migrating from place to place in search of food and what steps have been

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taken and how far those steps have alleviated the distress of famine. I listened in vain to the speech of the Food Minister . . . ."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" May I point out, Sir, that this debate is only about food decontrol? It is not a debate on famine at all."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" With due respect to the Hon. the Food Minister, I have got to point out that the control and decontrol are certainly mingled or mixed up with famine. I have got to point out that the famine is the result of the control and that it is a man-made famine."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" With decontrol it will be all right."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" It may or may not be sufficient, Sir. My object in referring to that famine now is that if the decontrol is insufficient for the purpose of alleviating famine and for the purpose of bringing immediate redress to the people the Hon. Minister should not be satisfied with mere decontrol. This famine is to a very large extent the result of the control. It is a man-made famine and unlike the famine in Bengal which was brought about for want of rationing this famine was brought about by the rationing.

" The procurement in Tinnevelly—in the Koilpatti taluk, in the Tiruchendur taluk and the Nangueri taluk was so severe and so tyrannous that people were left with no food. It is no exaggeration to say that the spectre of famine got behind the procurement official. So soon after he had passed there was nothing left for the people with the result that the people had to eat anything that they came across. Instances are on record that people had to eat blackgram and when that was not available they had to eat palmyrah fruit and when that was not available, they had to eat cattle beef and then they were faced with the problem of either to die or to migrate. Here I have got a case which I have got to mention in particular. There are not merely a few hundreds, but there are thousands who have wandered about taluks and districts in search of food and the day before yesterday . . . ."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" May I point out to the hon. Member that if it is his case that decontrol may intensify famine, he may continue his speech. If that is not his point, I request him to confine himself to the subject."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" I submit, Sir, it is relevant to the subject of control and decontrol, in this respect, that I desire to point out that this has been brought about as a result of the control. I wish to submit to the Hon. Minister, Sir, that in addition to the control certain other measures which are related and relevant to the issue are also necessary."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The hon. Member may suggest those things."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" Therefore, I must state my premises before I suggest the remedies. The present situation in which we find ourselves is this. I may point out to the Hon. Minister one or two instances which happened two days ago. Day before yesterday in Madura round about the railway station a good number of people were found and they did not belong to Madura. They came from the outlying towns and nearby taluks in search of food. And some of them made statements that they had nothing with them, they had no food in their houses and they had no money. One of them said that he has sold his everything for the purpose of buying food and another of them said that his wife's *Thali* had been sold for the purpose of buying food that could be found. This is the point to which I want to confine myself. In the face of a certain situation like this what should the Government do? How have they faced the situation? This is what they did. The Government officials persuaded them by soft words to go back to their own villages."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The premises have been clearly laid down, you may come to your inferences."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" I would point out another case so that . . ."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" I do not think anybody disputes that. We all know what is happening in Tinnevelly. What is required is the remedy you can suggest and that is also by way of indulgence."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" Regarding the remedy I beg to point out that the remedies suggested by the Government officials at the moment are not sufficient to meet the food situation. Want of action is not the remedy. The remedy suggested to the people of Koilpatti by the Revenue Divisional Officer—some 700 of them went to him day before yesterday—was to wait till the 31st of this month. They met him and told him they had no food to eat and they were told to wait till the 31st."

SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—" On a point of order. The hon. Member ignores the fact that Government have rushed 800 tons of rice . . ."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" It is 1,500 tons. Besides, I may inform the member that migration was not as much due to want of food as want of work."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—" If the suggestion is that there is enough food, then I have to mention also the fact that men have died and they did not die for want of work and no man dies for want of work, but for want of food. There are cases on record that people in those areas have died for want of food. What I would suggest as a remedy is if there was any time for officialdom to cut red-tapism, this is the time and instead of asking them to put in their applications or wait or tell them that there is work here or there or that famine relief works are undertaken at this place and that, wherever there are people starving, they should

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feed them and there is no doubt that there are people starving. It was suggested by my hon. Friend Mr. Muthuranga Mudaliyar that people are asking for work. The reason is they do not want to steal food and they want to be honest; they ask for work, so that they can earn it legally and buy food with it. It will be cold comfort to those sorry people to be told that famine relief works are being undertaken. They should be first fed. As I said the situation in the district is due entirely to the fact that procurement has been severe and it is with a great deal of shame and humiliation that I have got to point out that people are suffering from famine; I am not mentioning this because I belong to Tinnevelly or Madura district; I am mentioning this because such a calamity and such tragic things as occurred this year have not happened within living memory, and I say this with a real sense of shame and humiliation because this has happened while our Government, the Congress Government, is in power and I hope that they will not stand on mere official formalities, but will bring immediate comfort to the people. Let me hope that they will certainly bring immediate relief and that not merely words of comfort, but also measures of comfort will be mentioned by the Hon. Minister when he replies to the debate."

SRI N. RANGA REDDI:—" Mr. President, I congratulate the Hon. Minister for Food on the revised food policy. I was one of those who argued for a stricter control regarding rural rationing; but after listening to the speech of the Hon. Minister, I find that I have to change my opinion. My hon. Friend Mr. Suryanarayana Rao pointed out how only a few months ago the Hon. Minister gave evidence saying that food control should be continued. But he forgot one important point and that is that this Government is not entirely responsible for the food policy but that it is only the agent of the Central Government. It is agreed that rationing is to be introduced when there is shortage of foodgrains and how is it going to be met when Government cannot get foodgrains on its own account. If the food shortage is to be met, it will have to approach the Central Government which will have to get it from other parts of the world or the country. When the India Government divests itself of its resposibility for procuring foodgrains, then the Provincial Government cannot do anything better than what they have done.

" Regarding the Press Note issued by Government, my hon. Friend thought that there was some ambiguity with regard to the question of decontrol in the Ceded districts. The note is very clear. It says there will be decontrol in rural areas but it does not say anything about the statutory areas. He seems to feel doubts where there is none. Regarding giving up rural rationing, as I said, Government are unable to supply foodgrains. The necessary step to be taken will be either to enforce stricter control to supply food to the people or to decontrol, so as to allow people to procure food on their own account. In the circumstances following the Government of India divesting itself of its responsibility of supplying some grains to make up for the deficit, I must congratulate the Government on their having taken the next best course, which is also the proper course.

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"Regarding rural rationing, I may at once point out that a number of rules had been enforced in the past to the disadvantage of the villagers. The villager has all the disadvantage of rationing, but he never gets the advantage of rationing. There are some people, who are accustomed to take rice in those districts and they were not producing rice in their own lands. The point is they were neither growing rice nor were they allowed to purchase rice for their needs and the Government has not also made any provision to supply them what they want. When things were taken to their notice, they could not say anything than pay lip sympathy and plead their own commitments in respect of satutory rationed areas. When in such circumstances, the announcement is made regarding decontrol in the rural areas of the Ceded districts, I welcome the step because they at least have got the privilege of purchasing some of these things on their own account and they can get it freely without caring for the ration rules.

"When I am speaking on this Press Note, it is necessary for me to say something about the ban on movement of foodgrains from one taluk to another."

MR. PRESIDENT :—"Is it so."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—"If necessary."

SRI N. RANGA REDDI :—"This ban should never be imposed when decontrol has been introduced and rationing has been abolished. It would act as a great obstacle to the movement of foodgrains from one taluk to another and it is much better to have rationing than this sort of ban. If Government feel that this ban will solve the problem, I respectively submit that it can never solve the problem. If they want to tackle the distribution properly, they should take to entire control and adopt rationing and control and regulate distribution. But this ban on the transport of foodgrains from one taluk to another will only create obstacles and will create great difficulties in the various villages.

"I am indeed grateful to the Hon. Minister when he said that in the fixation of prices all these years, the producer did not benefit. From the beginning of these controls, other people had been benefitted and they were the consumers. The prices were fixed in the interests of the consumers. But regarding the present arrangements, though there has been a slight rise in prices to the benefit of the producer, it has adversely affected them. To-day, some agriculturists from Nellore district came to me and told me that the fixation of prices for molakulukulu was much less than what it was last year. In the previous years, paddy was classified into three varieties, but this year, it has been classified into two varieties and the higher variety has been graded down to the second variety, so much so the ryots complain that they are put to a loss. The point is that when the Government claim that they have done something to increase the price of foodgrains, they would not have meant it really, and I therefore request that they will consider the question of the price of this particular sort of paddy being enhanced.

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" Procurement in the villages has resulted in friction. The officials have stood on prestige. When their demand was put up high and the villager made any representations, and if any exchange of words followed, the officials always thought that their dignity was wounded. The result was on the slightest pretext these people were prosecuted. Not only has he to lose his grain, but also as a result of prosecutions he will have to go to jail. This decontrol policy has done the greatest service to the villager in that he will retain his grains and he will avoid going to jails and for that at least we will have to be very grateful to the Hon. Minister. I would submit once again that the price fixed for food grains is not sufficient. No doubt Government feel that the increase of price at the rate of Rs. 2 per maund and some increase in the price of millet will be a sufficient inducement to the ryots to part with their grains. I wish the Hon. Minister was aware that grains are sold in the blackmarket at thrice the value that has been fixed. The price is insufficient and it will not induce the ryot to part with his foodgrains. Therefore, I submit, Sir, that the price also should be enhanced. On previous occasions the Madras Government was saying that the fixation of price was not in their hands but in the hands of the Central Government. Now at least the fixation of price is left completely in the hands of the local Government and therefore I appeal to them to enhance the prices further so that the ryot may be tempted to grow his foodcrops and he may also be tempted to part with them easily."

DR. SYED TAJUDDIN SAHIB :—" Sir, food is a problem above all other problems that keeps both body and soul together. The Hon. Food Minister and his colleagues appear to be the embodiment or rather Avathar of bravery and courage; for they have taken courage in both their hands in the matter of decontrol. Sir, the consequences of this decontrol lies in the womb of 1948. At any rate this Government has taken the responsibility on its shoulders and our genial Food Minister on his own shoulders. I pray that no mishap should happen. It all depends upon the future, on the monsoon which has already failed to a large extent and various other factors that come into play when the year 1948 dawns. My only pity is that the present Government is paying attention only to curative measures. Of course, I know the present Government has done much to solve the food problem in their own way, though not in an ideal way, and yet their attention has been revetted only to this one aspect. They have totally failed to pay the least regard to the preventive measures. I shall place before this House a few suggestions so far as this aspect is concerned. Sir, this Government while decontrolling should not forget that it is their duty to place the right amount of food in all right places, in the right time and in the right form. Sir, our Government seems to have forgotten what modern science can do, can contribute towards the solution of food problem. But for scientific contributions, but for scientific economy thousands and tens of thousands of people will have been dead and gone by this time. We have not thoroughly realized this implication. In foreign countries various synthetic foods, synthetic proteins have

come into existence, and what they call food capsules were much in use during the war time. In geological time we will be able to cast off our stomach and be free from elementary needs, and the alimentary canal we can get rid of. Now, perhaps, we are far away from that age."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Now we are in the midst of food debate and time-limit."

DR. SYED TAJUDDIN SAHIB :—" Sir, we have got our own national habits, and it is high time we cast off our old habits. We, South Indians, can't do with rice. Rice is a very bad food, which entails very bad complaints like diabetes, etc. So we should switch on to some other habits which will be beneficial to us. We should replace rice with some other more nourishing cereal grains. And South Indians should be taught that it would be a baneful thing in the long run. For that a set of propagandists should be set afoot to go round the province and teach people and to tell them that there are other things which are more beneficial to their constitution ; there are food auxiliaries which we are forgetting, such as the one I suggested the other day, namely, that every compound should grow vegetables ; a kitchen garden should be found in every compound. No enactment has so far emerged from the Government to say that in times of such dire need as the present occasion, such kitchen gardens should spring up. (Sri B. Narayanaswami Nayudu : ' What about the water-tax?') We will have to solve in our own way. Food is more important than tax. There will be a time when taxes will be multiplied to any extent. So we should not stint paying taxes when they are needed."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" May I suggest to the hon. Member to come to the question of decontrol."

DR. SYED TAJUDDIN SAHIB :—" These are consequences which are likely to result from decontrol, and what measures should be adopted, I am just detailing. Otherwise . . ."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Are you in favour of decontrol or not? "

DR. SYED TAJUDDIN SAHIB :—" In the beginning I said the Ministers have taken courage in their hands and the consequences lie in the womb of the future."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" So we need not worry about it at present." (Laughter.)

DR. SYED TAJUDDIN SAHIB :—" Quite so, and so I only draw the attention of the Government to pay attention to subsidiary foods. And the ten crores, which the Minister said, as a saving after decontrol . . ."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I never said ; next year there will be, I said, a saving of ten crores by the Central Government."

DR. SYED TAJUDDIN SAHIB :—" I say, this ten crores and about ten crores of saving by the Local Government—

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these should be earmarked for putting our agriculture on a scientific basis. We should not sleep over after decontrolling; but we should be on the safe side and invest our finance for putting our agriculture on a scientific basis. That is all I have to say, Sir."

* THE HON. SRI O. P. RAMASWAMI REDDIYAR :—"தலைவர் அவர்களே, இவ்வளவு நேரம் கனம் அங்கத்தினர்கள் கட்டுப்பாடு நீக்குவதைப்பற்றி பேசினார்கள். என்னுடைய சகா அவர்கள் அதில் இவ்வளவு தூரம் சிரத்தை எடுத்துக்கொண்டு கட்டுப்பாட்டை எடுக்கவேண்டுமென்றிருக்கிறார் என்றும், அவர்களுடைய சிரத்தையின் மூலமாக அதை நீக்கப்பட்டிருக்கிறது என்றும் சொன்னார்கள். நான் கட்டுப்பாட்டைப் பற்றி பேசவரவில்லை. இன்னும் கண்ட்ரோலை நீக்கிவிட்டு உற்பத்தியை பெருக்குவதைப்பற்றியும் பேசவேண்டியதில்லை. மாகாணத்தில் எப்படி நிலைமை இப்பொழுது இருக்கிறது, கனம் ஆதித்தியன் மாகாணத்தில் இப்பொழுது நிலைமை எப்படி இருக்கிறது. அதற்காக அரசாங்கம் எந்தெந்த விதமாக வேலைசெய்யவேண்டும். என்னென்ன செய்யப்படுகிறது என்பதைப் பற்றியும் அவர்கள் சொன்னார்கள். அநேக அங்கத்தினர்களும், அதைப்பற்றி சிந்தித்துக் கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள். நானும் அதைப்பற்றி சொம்பவும் கவலையாகத்தானிருக்கிறேன். அதற்காக நாம் என்ன செய்யவேண்டுமோ அதற்கு இயற்கை சரியாக இல்லை. நாம் செய்கை மூலம் எவ்வளவு செய்ய முடியுமோ அவ்வளவு தான் செய்யமுடியும். அதற்கு மிகுந்த மழை வேண்டும். 'வானம் சுறுங்கின் தானம் சுறுங்கும்' மழை இல்லாமல் மனிதப் பிரயத்தனத்தில் எவ்வளவு செய்யமுடியுமோ அவ்வளவு தான் செய்யலாம். அதற்கு தகுந்த முயற்சி எந்தெந்த விதத்தில் செய்யவேண்டுமென்பதை யோசித்துக்கொண்டு வருகிறோம். நேற்று கூட நானும் Food Secretary-ம் Director of Agriculture ம் என்ன செய்யவேண்டுமென் பதைப்பற்றி சிந்தித்துக் கொண்டிருந்தோம். நம் மாகாணத்தை எடுத்துக் கொண்டால் சாதாரணமாக வருஷா வருஷம் ஒரு கோடி 10 லட்சம் டன் நெல் சாகுபடியாகிறது. வழக்கத்திற்கு விரோதமாக 24 ஜில்லாக்கள் உள்ள இந்த மாகாணத்தில் 15, 16 ஜில்லாக்களில் மழை இல்லாமல் போனதால் இப்பொழுது தொந்திரவு ஏற்பட்டிருக்கிறது. குறிப்பாக புஞ்சை இப்பொழுது காய்ந்துபோய்விட்டது. எப்பொழுதும் ஒரு கோடி எழு லட்சம் டன் புஞ்சை தானியம் பயிரிடுகிறது வழக்கம். அதில் இப்பொழுது மழை இல்லாததால அநேகமாக மூன்றில் ஒரு பங்குகூட புஞ்சை தானியம் அகப்படாது என்று தெரிகிறது. தவிர நஞ்சையை எடுத்தால் நம் மாகாணத்தில் 75 லட்சம் எக்கர் நிலங்கள் நீர் பாசன வசதி உள்ளன. அதில் சுமார் 'டெல்டெய்க் ஏரியாவில்' அதாவது ஆற்றுப் பாசனம் உள்ளது சுமார் 45 லட்சம் எக்கர்கள். மிச்சமெல்லாம் மானம்பார்த்து வரிகளைக் கொண்டு சாகுபடி செய்யும் நிலைமையில் இருக்கின்றன. முன்னால் தெரிவித்தேன். சுமார் 45 லட்சம் எக்கர் ஏரியின் கீழ் இருக்கிறது என்று அவைகளுக்கு இப்பொழுது மழை இல்லாமல் போய்விட்டது. மழையும் நின்றுவிட்டது. அநேகம் விவசாயிகள் எக்கருக்கு ரூ. 100 முதல் 150 வரையில் செலவுசெய்து ஜலம் இல்லாமல் அநேகம் பயிர்கள் காய்ந்துவிட்டது. இன்னும் கொஞ்சம் பெரிய ஏரிகள் இருக்கிற ஆயக்கட்டுகளில் உற்பத்தி செய்யலாம். ஆனால் சமீபத்தில் மழை பெய்யாததால் நமக்குக் கிடைக்கும் குறைந்த பட்சம் 20 லட்சம் கிடைப்பதில் சாகுபடி இல்லாமல் அதில் குறைந்துபோய் நமக்கு 10 லட்சம் டன் அரிசி இல்லாமல் போய்விடும். புஞ்சை தானியங்களிலும். கொஞ்சம் குறைவு ஏற்படும். இது மாதிரி நமக்கு சொம்பவும் கஷ்டமிருக்கிறது இதைப்பற்றி மத்ய அரசாங்கத்தாரிடம் தெரிவித்து எந்தெந்த முறையில் வசதிசெய்து கொடுக்கமுடியுமோ, அதை செய்யும்படியாகவும், அதற்கு வேண்டிய இறக்குமதிக்கும் நமக்கு ஏற்பாடு செய்யும்படியாகவும் நாங்கள் ஏற்பாடு செய்துகொண்டிருக்கிறோம். நாம் எவ்வளவுக்கெவ்வளவு பயனபட செய்துகொள்ள முடியுமோ அதையும் செய்துகொண்டிருக்கிறோம். ஆனால் கனம் அங்கத்தினர்களும் பொது ஜனங்கள் எல்லோரும் அதற்கு ஒத்தாசை செய்யவேண்டும். அரசாங்கமும் ஒரு பக்கம் செய்துகொண்டு வருகின்றார்கள். பொது ஜனங்கள் செய்யவேண்டிய கடமைகளை செய்துவந்தால் இந்த சந்தர்ப்பத்தில் ஏற்பட்ட

[Sri O. P. Ramaswami Reddiyar] [19th December 1947

பஞ்சத்தை தவிர்க்க எந்த முறையில் எல்லோரும் யோசிக்கவேண்டுமோ, அந்த முறையில் யோசித்து அதற்குத் தகுந்த முறைப்படி வேலை செய்தால் இந்தப் பஞ்சத்தை நாம் தவிர்க்க முடியும். எனென்றால் இப்பொழுது வட கிழக்கு பருவ மழை இல்லாமல் போனதால் இந்த கஷ்டம் ஏற்பட்டிருக்கிறது. இனிமேல் அது வருவதும் துர்லபம். இனிமேல் கர்ப்போட்ட மழை பெய்தாலும், பிறகு ஜலம் வந்தாலும் அதை வைத்துக்கொண்டு நஞ்சையில் புஞ்சை சாகுபடி செய்தும் இன்னும் அந்த ஜலத்தை வைத்துக்கொண்டு சோளம், கேப்பை முதலியவைகளை பயிர்செய்து அதன் மூலமாக ஜனங்களை காப்பாற்றமுடியும். அதற்கு பதிலாக கொஞ்சம் நெல்லை எந்த முறையில் ஆரம்பித்து சாகுபடி செய்யலாமோ அதன் மூலமாக பயிர்செய்து ஜனங்களை காப்பாற்றமுடியும். அந்தப்படி செய்ய முடியாமலிருந்தால் தான் கஷ்டம் ஏற்படுகிறது. இதற்கு Agricultural Department-ல் அதைப்பற்றி தெரிவிக்கும்படி செய்திருக்கிறோம். அதற்கு பொது ஜனங்களும் ஈடுபட்டு தகுந்த வேலை செய்யவேண்டும் அரசாங்கத்தார் மட்டும் வேலைசெய்தால் பிரயோஜனம் இல்லை. இன்னும் ஜனங்களுடைய பழக்க வழக்கங்களில் மாறுதல் ஏற்படவில்லை. அவர்கள் மாறுவதற்கு அவர்களுடைய பிரதிநிதிகளாகிய நீங்கள் அதிகம் அவர்களுக்கு யோசனைசொல்லி உற்சாகப்படுத்தி வேலை செய்யவேண்டும். அரசாங்கத்தார் வேலை செய்தால் அதை பயன்படுத்திக் கொள்ள ஜனங்கள் தயாராய் இல்லை என்றால் பஞ்சத்தை தவிர்க்க முடியாது. நீங்கள் எவ்வளவு எடுத்துச் சொல்லமுடியுமோ அதை நீங்கள் எடுத்துச் சொல்லி அதன் மூலம் ஜலத்தை வைத்துக்கொண்டு எவ்வளவு பயிர் செய்ய முடியுமோ அதை செய்து தான்யத்தை அபிவிருத்தி செய்து அதன் மூலம் ஜனங்களை காப்பாற்றும் முறையில் நீங்களும் கவனிக்கவேண்டும். இப் பொழுதே அதை கவனிக்காமல் விட்டுவிட்டால் இவ்வளவு (கைப்பிடி) தான்யம் கூடவராது! நாம் இப்பொழுது அதிகமாக பேச ஆரம்பிக்கிறோம். ஆனால் காரியத்தில் ஒன்றும் இல்லை. தகுந்த முறையில் நாம் எவ்வளவு பேசினோமோ அதில் நூற்றில் ஒரு பங்கு காரியத்தில் ஒவ்வொருவரும் செய்கிறார்களா என்று யோசித்தால் அது ரொம்பவும் குறைவு. இப்பொழுது அரசாங்கம் எவ்வளவோ கஷ்டமான நிலைமையில் இருக்கிறது. தேசத்தில் ஜனங்கள் பரிதபித்துக்கொண்டிருக்கின்றார்கள். கர்ப்போட்ட பருவ மழை இல்லாமல் நம்மை கஷ்டத்திற்கு கொண்டுவந்து விட்டிருக்கிறது. வியாபாரிகளைப் பார்த்தால் அவர்களும் அந்தந்த முறையில் தான் நடந்து வருகின்றார்கள். எந்த துறையிலும் நாம் யோசித்து இனிமேல் நடக்க வேண்டியவைகளில் அதிகம் சிரத்தை எடுத்துக்கொண்டு அவரவர்கள் கடமையைச் செய்யவேண்டும். அப்பொழுது தான் எவ்வளவு கஷ்டம் இருந்தாலும் அதை தைர்யமாக நாம் சமாளிக்கமுடியும். ஆகையால் இந்த விஷயங்களையும் நீங்கள் கவனிக்கவேண்டும்.

"நம் மாகாணத்தில் இப்பொழுது 5 கோடி 30 லட்சம் ஜனங்கள் இருக்கிறார்கள். அதில் 67 லட்சம் ஜனங்கள் நகரங்களில் வசிக்கிறார்கள். நகர வாசிகளுக்கு கிராமங்களிலிருந்து தான் தான்யம் அனுப்பி வேண்டியதாக இருக்கிறது. நகரங்களில் இருப்பதனால் அநேகம் வசதி கள் செய்து கொடுக்கவேண்டியதாக இருக்கிறது. அதற்கு பணம் வேண்டியதாக இருக்கிறது. இன்னும் பார்த்தால் இந்தப் பஞ்சத்தால் அநேகம் நிலங்கள் காய்ந்துவிட்டன. அந்த காய்ந்த நிலங்களுக்கு நாம் வரி வஜா செய்யவேண்டிய நிலைமை ஏற்பட்டிருக்கிறது. அதற்காக ஏழு கோடி ரூபாய் வஜா செய்யவேண்டியதாக இருக்குமோ என்று மனதில் தோன்றுகிறது. நிலைமை இப்பொழுது அவ்வளவு நன்றாக இல்லை. எவ்வளவு நாம் பயன்படுத்திக்கொண்டு வேலை செய்கிறோமோ, அதைப் பொருத்து இருக்கிறது. நாம் இந்த பஞ்சத்தை சமாளிப்பது என்பதை நான் உங்களுக்கு சொல்லவேண்டியதில்லை. ஆகையால் கனம் அங்கத்தினர்கள் இது விஷயங்களை எல்லாம் மனதில் வைத்துக்கொண்டு எந்தெந்த முறையில் வேலைசெய்யவேண்டுமோ அந்த முறையில் பொது ஜனங்கள் அபிப்பிராயத்தைத் தெரிந்து வேலை செய்யவேண்டுமென்றும் அப்பொழுதுதான் நாம் இந்தக் கஷ்டத்தை தவிர்க்க முடியுமென்று சொல்லிக்கொண்டு நான் இத்துடன் நிறுத்திக்கொள்ளுகிறேன்."

* MRS. MONA HENSMAN :—"Mr. President, Sir, I have only a few remarks to make and you will understand that no woman

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can keep silent while food is being discussed. I think everybody will agree that we would have to offer a few remarks on such an important debate as this.

"I must congratulate the Hon. Minister on doing what he thinks is right, but, Sir, some of us may have our own views in the matter, and I trust he will bear with me if I make a few suggestions and I do so in the nature of helpful remarks and not with the intention of criticising him, Sir. I would not like to take up the burden of looking after the food of this Province for a day—nor even that of the City. Therefore, I have a great respect for a gentleman who undertakes such a responsibility and yet can smile and keep calm on the Treasury Bench. (Hear, hear.)

"Recently I had been to a country north-east of India, where there were no controls, and I saw, Sir, what happened. The prices rocketed sky high and though plenty of food was there, cooked and uncooked, the children were also there looking in at the windows of the shops but not being able to eat, and the women were standing there too hoping and praying that some time or other they would be able to buy that food for their children. Those women were not those of the poorer classes only, and you will agree that in this country like that of other eastern countries there is a vast population below what may be called the self-sufficiency line, apart from the poverty line. I no doubt appreciate the sacrifices made by our agriculturists who have given us for the last few years all that they could spare at a price far below blackmarket rates. Although the war is over we are still suffering from the effects of the war, and we do pay our tribute to those who have not made any money at our expense over food, but, Sir, should we try to raise the amount of payment even by two rupees per maund which seems so little in this House and in the houses of urban residents but will, mean a great deal to the average person. Sir, this will cut very hard at the average poor person who now buys the ration at the highest price he can afford, and if the rates are increased, it requires a very small knowledge of home economics to guess what the ultimate price is that they can afford to pay? The Minister said that the price would have increased like a spiral if control had been continued. I beg to differ from the Hon. the Minister and I do not believe it would have increased much, Sir, of rice were still controlled. The Hon. Minister for Food also mentioned, Sir, that the whole position will be examined later on, and controls may be reintroduced in these informal rationing districts if he finds that the position is bad. What is going to happen at the moment if these controls are lifted? Rationing officers will have to be transferred to other places, and it will be very difficult to collect experienced men and reintroduce rationing. I would have pleaded for the continuance of these controls on a basis fairer to the agriculturists. It does not matter if the price is increased by one rupee or two rupees per ten or twenty maunds. If there is rationing then there will be some hope that people will get the rice by paying a little higher price. Then the Hon. Minister for Food also said that people would be free to buy and sell rice within their own districts. Suppose some of us went for a holiday to some place where

there was no rationing, if for argument's sake we brought back some rice, what would happen to us in the Central Station? Would we have to go to the lock-up and send for the Hon. Minister to give us bail and special privileges because we are members of the Legislature? I may tell you that women are the most law-abiding citizens, but it would be a sorry thing if we went on a holiday and could not bring back with us some rice from a district where there was plenty available. I trust this question will be answered by the Hon. Minister."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" You will be prosecuted, that is very clear." (Laughter.)

MRS. MONA HENSMAN :—" I have my answer—and it is very definite that decontrol will lead to law-breaking. Again the Minister said that work will be given to the people in that area. No doubt this will be beneficial to the men and women of our country to keep up their spirits. But if a man cannot get food, what is the use of his having ten or fifteen rupees for work. The Minister no doubt said that 1,500 tons of rice had been rushed to a district that needed it and we congratulate him on this valiant effort but there is no use of merely putting money into the hands of the people when there is no food for them to buy with the money! Coins cannot feed starving children, and a man cannot eat a full purse.

" Lastly, I would illustrate what I have said by this problem of sugar decontrol. From the 10th of December we were rejoicing in the hope that we would be getting more sugar and there would be no controls on this article of necessary diet. Yesterday the Hon. Minister told me that he had released 17,000 tons or so of sugar. In the bazaars in Kandaswami Koil street we had to pay yesterday for sugar at the rate of Rs. 1-8-3 per viss. In Spencers where some of us have drawn our rations, for some time past, there is no sugar and I shall go again to them to-morrow or Monday in desparation for the holiday season. There is only decontrol on paper but not in practice. I would appeal to the Hon. Minister to watch this situation very carefully and see that he gives his Ration officers only a month's holiday when decontrol comes in order that they may be called back if need arises. But we hope that this rise in price is only temporary and that things will be better soon and that we will have real decontrol in spirit as well as in the letter."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" I would like to know how long the House is prepared to sit."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" We should sit till 8 p.m. at the latest."

* SRI M. NARAYANA MENON :—" Sir, I have only a few words to say with regard to Malabar because speeches have been made and the facts brought to the notice of the House in respect of the other districts alone. With regard to Malabar I fully realize that the Ministry has done some justice. I do not blame

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them. I understand from the Hon. Minister's speech that there will be procurement throughout Malabar and statutory and informal rationing in rural parts and it is with regard to informal rationing there is difficulty. We have been getting food from Burma, Hyderabad and also from the surplus districts in the Presidency. We have nothing to get in Malabar because all around us are only deficit States. Travancore and Cochin have nothing to give except coconut which we also have in abundance. Therefore if there is no statutory rationing in this district even for a day then people will have to starve. I, therefore, request the Government to reconsider the matter in respect of Malabar and introduce continuous statutory rationing even in rural parts.

" Sir, it is very unfortunate to hear and it is sometimes repeated in this House also that Malabar is a favoured district with regard to rice. It is a fact that we get a large quantity of rice than the other deficit districts because we have a population of 40 lakhs. The hon. Member Mr. Bhima Rao complained that much rice was not sent to the Ceded districts, but then all the four Ceded districts put together produce other grains and have not as much population as Malabar. What rice is sent to us is just enough and not more according to the ration allowed and therefore it cannot be said we are favoured. That expression ' favoured ' no one can like. No honest man would like to be favoured. Every honest man would like justice being done to him.

" But there is one thing more to be said in this connexion. We are a hard working people and we produce besides rice, coconut, pepper, ginger and timber. Rice is our staple food and the next three may be used but only in small quantities. If we eat a coconut each day for two or three days, we will fall sick. We are exporting these things to the other districts and they are having the benefit of our labour. Should they not give us in return rice to keep our body and soul together? There need be no complaint on that score.

" Sir, when it was stated that we were a favoured district I am provoked to emphasize our neglected condition. For the last 150 years Malabar has been completely ignored. It may be due to our fault or it may be providential. The British Government did not introduce any irrigation system at all for the last 150 years. During this period the amount spent on irrigation in Malabar would be only 3 to 4 thousand rupees. Of course this Government proposes to do something. They have some plans, but nothing has come to fruition. So many projects are under contemplation but nothing has been accomplished yet. As minor projects, I would suggest the excavation of large tanks of about or over 100 acres in several convenient places in the district. That is the opinion of some engineers who have understood the conditions of Malabar. We have only small tanks which landowners have excavated for their own use, but they are not Government tanks. This project will not cost much to the Government.

" One other small point I want to bring to the notice of the House. Now we have a drought. I can confidently say that a

drought in Malabar means that in many places—from the north of North Malabar to the south of South Malabar—it will be very difficult to grow the second crop because there is no irrigation system anywhere. The Government have been pleased to send us some pumps and they are doing some work. The local authorities are taking some interest in the matter and they are really helping us. But there is one matter. We are asked to pay Rs. 10 per hour for the use of the pump."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" That is for the purposes of agriculture."

* SRI M. NARAYANA MENON :—" Yes, for agriculture."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" I thought the rate was Rs. 10 per month."

* SRI M. NARAYANA MENON :—" Sir, I made enquiries of the Fire Officers and learnt that they have to spend two gallons of petrol for one hour. It costs something below Rs. 5, so that the utmost the Government should charge the people should be not more than Rs. 5. But instead of Rs. 5, they are asked to pay Rs. 10. I request the Government, as a short-term help, not to take anything from the ryots who use these pumps. Probably the Government would be spending Rs. 4 for an hour but let the Government give it up, so that the ryots may cultivate the land and produce something in these critical times. We should remember that the ryots have to pay the second-crop assessment also in addition to the pump fees. Moreover the yield will be much less because there should be some additional factors at work in order to yield normal production. So even with pumping, there will not be a full and satisfactory harvest of second crops. I therefore request the Government to give immediately the required measure of help to the ryots.

" Of course, we want more water and more irrigation. I have always been pleading for that. The Government have been listening to me, but I do not know what result it will produce. (Laughter.) Next year they may say they have no money. Now at least they have some money. (Interruption.) I know that the Malampuzha project and two other projects are about to be sanctioned by the Government. But we want something more. Otherwise we are going to starve. All along we have been getting rice from Burma and other places. The Government should help us by allotting more rice for us for one or two years until normal conditions are restored. But as long-term measures, Malabar has to be helped by proper irrigation facilities."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The Hon. Minister will reply at 7-30 p.m. Other hon. Members will have to finish before that time."

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" Mr. President, Sir, I rather sympathise with the Hon. Food Minister and offer my congratulations to him because I really feel he is arguing like an able lawyer a losing case (interruption) or he is

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treating a dying patient desperately as an expert doctor. It is only for the sake of those whose mandate he has to obey he is doing this. (The Hon. Dr. T. S. S. Rajan: 'There is no mandate'.) It is the policy of the Government of India that is responsible for this decontrol here. I ask the Hon. Minister one plain question: 'What was his attitude when there was a Provincial Ministers' Conference?' From the press reports I understand that Mr. C. B. Gupta, the Food Minister of the United Provinces, characterised this policy as extremely unfortunate. He has called it a gamble and as being against all economic principles."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"Why does the hon. Member quote him? He is not behind him in this respect."

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Sir, I am behind the Hon. Food Minister of Madras. From the reports that appeared in the press I understand he was also feeling that this was a gamble. Therefore, I think, Sir, he is treating a dying patient. I want to point out to him that de-control at the present moment is very dangerous for the people of the province. He has admitted for the first time, though the Government of India has admitted it before, that there are risks in this policy. I ask, Sir, 'Are you going to risk the lives of the people of this province, play pranks with the lives of the people of the province and make experiments which may or may not be successful?' The Hon. Food Minister has said that the machinery of food control will be kept intact. That means that he is doubtful whether the policy of de-control will be successful or not. If that is not going to be successful, then this machinery will continue. Then why are you experimenting with the lives of the people? This is only an experiment. Our province has been a deficit province all along. Even in the pre-war days we were not self-sufficient and we had to import rice from Burma and other places. After de-control, what is going to be our position? The Hon. Food Minister has said that we could not get one single foodgrain without the permission or the intervention of the Government of India. What is the Government of India going to do? Is the Government of India going to permit us to import or are we going to get our foodgrains in our own province?

"Sir, my hon. Friend Mr. Ranga Reddi said that in spite of the fact that he was against de-control some time back he is now for it. Of course he has fallen in line with his party. He said that foodgrains have to be procured from here and they were not going to come from outside. Sir, what is the meaning of control? Why was this control introduced? The object was not either to get foodgrains from outside or force the people to give foodgrains from within the province. The object of control was really that foodgrains should be got somehow or other from some place and they should be distributed equally among the people of the province in order that, even if the people do not get a full meal, at least they may get half a meal a day and be saved from starvation and death. That was the object of control. If it is possible for us to get foodgrains from our province, then certainly de-control will be of

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use. If we fail, this province is going to face famine as reported in the press. The Hon. Food Minister is not sure whether there will be monsoon or not and what is going to happen if there is to be famine in the province after de-control. (Sri S. B. Adityan : 'There is famine now in the province.') Sir, my hon. Friend Mr. Adityan has rightly pointed out that there is famine."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The hon. Member should finish his speech at 6-45 p.m."

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" Sir, not only is there famine, but also there is the unfortunate prospect of a far greater famine. That being the case, is it advisable that you should ignore all possibilities of famine, ignore the present position of famine and then complacently say : 'We are going to have de-control. Fortunately or unfortunately, it has been decided by the Government of India and we cannot do anything except obeying the Government of India.' I say, Sir, 'Do obey the Government of India, but you have got your own peculiar circumstances in this province and those peculiar circumstances have got to be looked into.' I ask the Hon. Minister for Food to place his hand on his breast . . ."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Find out where his heart is situated ! "

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" Yes, Sir. But unfortunately he is not a free agent. I shall quote a couplet from that great Indian national poet, Sir, Muhammad Iqbal.

تقليد كي روش سے تو بہتر ہے خود كشي
رستہ بھي ڈھونڈ خضر كا سودا بھي چھوڑ دے *

" If we had followed that principle and if we had given up blindly following other people and taken care of our own province and our own people, we would not have been faced with this plight. I would even now implore the Food Minister to tell the Government of India, 'Let us be left to ourselves in the matter of food and let there be no control.' At least let there be de-control of the control we are having in all these matters.

" Only one point more, Sir, and I shall finish. Sir, the Hon. Premier who is unfortunately not here, said that the masses cannot change. He was right in saying that. Here it is not a question of political ideology ; it is not a question of any social reform : but it is a question of stomach. Where is the question of changing when people know that there is going to be starvation? What is the use of asking masses to change? "

"Sir, I shall cite one instance here. This morning a report came to me that in Pallavaram people have come to know that there is going to be decontrol and so they have begun to hoard, that prices have begun to rise and that in ration-shops only one day's ration

was being given and for that people have to stand before the ration-shops from morning till evening. The people are asking, 'How are we to attend to our daily work, if we are to stand for the whole of the day before ration-shops?' I am also told that it has been ordered by the Collector that not more than one day's ration should be given and that people should come every day to have their rations and that for only three days in a week should rations be given. If that is the state of things even at the prospect of de-control, then what would be the effect, if actual decontrol is introduced?

"Then, Sir, people have more important work to attend to and if they are made to spend the whole of the day in buying rations, how could they attend to those things. Sir, there is one Urdu proverb which I should like to quote here. It says—

* بقر عید میں بچینگے تو محرم میں ناچینگے

"Its meaning is this. It is only if you are alive in the month of sacrifice to the Gods, that you can dance at the time of Muharram. That is to say, it is only when you can keep your life, that you can expect to do other things. The prime necessity of a man is to preserve his life. It is only then that he can have other things. That is the meaning of the proverb. If food is not given to the people, what is the use of giving gramophones or electricity or radios to them? What is the use of digging wells and tanks, if people die of starvation?"

MR. PRESIDENT:—"I think the hon. Member has not correctly understood what the Hon. Premier has said."

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"I do not know much of Tamil, Sir. If I had not correctly understood the Hon. Premier, I beg his pardon, Sir. From what I have been able to understand from his remarks, I am giving expression to my views.

"Only one point more, Sir, before I finish. The hon. Minister for Food said that the Government of India are giving us a subsidy and that it will be utilized for increasing production. I shall ask him only one question. What has been done up till now to improve cultivation and to increase production? We have been having control for the last three and a half years. We knew that it was a war measure and that it would be given up some day or other after the war was over. War is now over by three years and I should like to ask what has the hon. Minister for Food or this Government done in this direction? If nothing has been done all these years, is it not right on the part of this House to request the hon. Minister for Food to wait for some more time and see how their efforts at increased production has worked and then introduce de-control in the Province? I am sure, Sir, he would not be justified in introducing de-control at this stage. Thank you, Sir."

* SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR:—"Mr. President, Sir, we are now on the subject of de-control and not on

famine. My hon. Friend Mr. Farookhi has said that some United Provinces man has said that this is a gamble. Sir, if decontrol is a gamble, if what the Government of India and the Madras Government are undertaking is a gamble, and which Mahatma Gandhi has been preaching all these days—if all these things are a gamble,—then I should say that we are in a good company. Controls there were in Britain during the war and as soon as the war was over, all controls were removed in Britain."

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" America is re-introducing controls now."

SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—" Sir, Britain is not a great producer. She has to depend upon other countries for her food supply and other raw materials and yet Britain has introduced de-control after the war. (An hon. Member ' What are the things that Britain has de-controlled?') She has de-controlled everything, Sir. These controls and rationing have been introduced into this country not by this Government or on our initiative. It was the foreign Government, the British Government that started this control and rationing and they have now stopped it in their own country. What we advised them was to change their tactics, but they would not take our advice. The present Congress Government who stepped into their shoes had to carry on the process where they had left, and so the good officials of the British Government, and the non-gazetted officers for whom we are so solicitous, have been managing these controls and running the show. The rationing officials, the Revenue officials and the Civil Supply department and other non-gazetted officers working in those departments are now in charge of rationing and control and we have seen what a havoc this rationing has produced in our countryside.

" Now, Sir, people are talking about famine. We have known a number of famines in this country after the advent of the British Government—I myself have experienced some of them—but in no famine or non-famine years previously have prices risen so high as during these days of rationing and control. These rationing and controls have brought such a steep rise in prices of commodities as have never been witnessed in the past so many years. What all the Hon. Premier has just appealed to the common people, and what all he has appealed to the members of this House to advise the common people, are only very just and reasonable. The Premier's appeal must go straight into our hearts and into the hearts of the common people outside the precincts of this House. The mentality of the people must change. Rationing has been in existence for over three years and controls have been in existence all along. Under the cover of control and rationing, black-marketing has raised its head to an abnormal extent. The ration shops set up by the Government, and the wholesale agents set up by the Government have begun to purchase paddy in the black-market and sell rice in the black-market at abnormal prices. Even to-day rice is selling in the black-market at Rs. 1-8-0 per measure. That is the position, Sir. Let us at least remove this

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control and rationing and then this blot of black-marketing will vanish. Our great leader Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, even before he became the Prime Minister of the Indian Dominion had said that these black-marketeers should be horsewhipped and that the sooner it was uprooted the better. So also Mahatma Gandhi even when he came to Madras in 1945 expressed the same view, but his advice was that they should be horsewhipped non-violently.

" Now, Sir, an anti-corruption department has been set up by this Government, but it is no good. In spite of its existence, corruption has been going on galore; black-market has been going on galore; still we are talking of famine conditions and saying that controls should not be removed. The earlier the controls are removed, the earlier the dishonesty of the people will stop. Corruption will then stop automatically. That is what Mahatma Gandhi has been advising the Government and the people in his prayer meetings. Mahatma Gandhi is now alive in our midst and we are proud to be his contemporaries. Yet we have not learnt all his moral teachings; we have not learnt all his non-violent teachings and we have not been honest to ourselves. All these vices are due to these controls and rationing and black-marketing. They must be got rid of as early as possible and the country must be left to develop its morality. The agriculturists and producers must realise that they are the backbone of the country and that they must produce as much as possible for all the people of the country and not merely for themselves or for their families. The officers must also realise that they are no longer the servants of a bureaucratic foreign Government getting fat salaries, but that they are servants of the people and that they are also citizens of a free India and must serve as honest men. They must improve their morality and their character.

" Therefore, I submit, Sir, that the longer we maintain these controls and rationing, the greater will be the black-marketing and the more will the character of the people be blackened and the sooner we get rid of them the better for the people and the country."

SRI B. NARAYANASWAMI NAYUDU :—" Mr. President, Sir, I will just deal with the salient points of the whole question of de-control. The real question is, ' What is the meaning of de-control that has been proposed by this Government? ' If that is understood, the results will follow as a matter of course. What is the idea of this Government and of the Government of India in introducing de-control? They have said, ' We do not want to run these ration-shops and the ration department any more, because it costs the Government so much '. This is what the Government of India have said and what this Government is also saying.

" Announcing the Government of India's food policy in the Central Legislative Assembly on the 10th December, the Hon. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Food Minister of the Government of India, said, ' We have got to meet the difference between the internal prices and the prices of imported foodgrains and for that the Government of India had to pay a subsidy. The subsidy from

April 1946 to March 1947 amounted to Rs. 20·59 crores. From April 1947 to December 1947, it was estimated at Rs. 17·35 crores and if it was continued till the end of the current financial year, it would be about Rs. 22·5 crores.'

" Therefore, the Government of India have to foot the bill for Rs. 22·5 crores if they are to continue this rationing system till the end of the current financial year. That is one thing.

" Then if they want to continue it for the whole of the next year, what will be their position? Because of the difficulties of securing imports, they get only 50 per cent of their demand from the international bodies. Not only were they not able to get more, but the price which they have to pay had gone on increasing. The landing cost of rice now imported from Burma is Rs. 21 per maund. But the price fixed by the Government for us, we all know. If the Government of India want to import rice from Burma to-day, they must pay Rs. 21 per maund. That is why the Government of India say, ' Our finances do not permit us to continue paying this subsidy anymore. It was Rs. 20 crores last year and two crores more this year. We cannot, therefore, spend anything more on this hereafter.' The hon. Food Minister of the Government of India has expressed his helplessness in the matter. India has no international status to secure her foodgrains from other countries. We cannot also buy from the Rangoon market. The present position of the Government of Madras is that they are spending Rs. 14 crores every year for the food subsidy. They are therefore introducing de-control in order that they may save this sum every year.

" Well, Sir, if they have got to continue this control system and if they have got to keep up the present state of ration at 8 ounces for an adult, the cost of maintaining the system will come to about Rs. 14 crores for the Provincial Government. Have they got the necessary finance to go on like this? That is why they are obliged to introduce de-control.

" Do the Provincial Government have the finances? Can they go on with all these things indefinitely? It is the breakdown of the system that is at the bottom; it is really nothing more than that. They do not want to spend Rs. 7 crores in order to give this 8 oz.; and they have taken a further step which costs Rs. 8 crores. Therefore, they say, we shall control the procurement of paddy at a certain rate in the surplus districts and then distribute. Therefore, there is no question of de-control at all; it is only a question of continuing the rationing system and controlling it by means of procurement of rice. The whole question is one of procurement in the surplus districts. I asked the Food Minister what is the target he has fixed for procurement from the surplus districts? He has not given the actual figures; he has simply said that roughly it would be about 6½ million tons. Therefore I say, when there is said to be de-control and rationing goes, the price system still remains; the control of price is still kept on. The next question is: how are you going to enforce it? The central point of the

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price system is this : they want to procure paddy from the surplus districts at the rate of Rs. 11 per maund. Burma rice is selling —if you want it—at Rs. 21. The Government of Madras who have been having full control over price, give Rs. 11; and the people know full well what Dr. Rajendra Prasad said and also the current value of paddy. Then, how are you going to get the co-operation of the surplus districts and ask the people there to part with their paddy for a maximum price of Rs. 11? That is the crux of the whole matter. You must understand the sacrifice that the surplus districts are making, especially when we know that all the surplus districts are in the north except one in the south, Tanjore. And what is the sacrifice they are making? It is really a ransom which the paddy producers in the Circars districts are paying for maintaining the whole population. I am not grudging it of course; I only say how you must be feeling in the matter; and when the Hon. Sri Madhava Menon and Mr. Narayana Menon talk of the theory of the much-favoured nation, I want to know how you are going to get nearly 180,000 tons of rice at Rs. 10 or Rs. 11. If the Burma rice is given to you, you will have to pay Rs. 3 crores more. Therefore, you are now benefiting to the extent of Rs. 3 crores. Are you entitled to take the paddy at this rate when your copra and other articles are also decontrolled and you get higher prices for them? How can you ask the Circars districts and Tanjore to take very much less?

" Then we come to the Madras City. We have got 120,000 tons—I have the figures here. What does it mean? It means another Rs. 3 crores. The non-gazetted officers are now asking for more dearness allowance; they do not realize at all how the producers of paddy are really benefiting them, how they are giving at Rs. 10 when legitimately they should give for Rs. 21. Dearness allowance is asked for without taking into consideration the sacrifice that the Circars districts are making. Therefore, my submission is this : when the Hon. Minister for Food said we are given full freedom to fix the paddy price, is it right and is it just on the part of the Government, when they know full well that only five or six districts alone can do it, to fix that rate? Can you not fix the price at a much higher rate, not for the purpose of benefiting those districts, but really to improve the very difficult situation in the country? As a matter of fact, the Board of Revenue recommended Rs. 7-8-0, if I am not correct, I may be corrected—but what you have fixed is Rs. 7-1-11 for paddy "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" You will have to add Re. 1-6-0 more above the prevailing price, for paddy, and Rs. 2 per maund for rice."

SRI B. NARAYANASWAMI NAYUDU :—" The paddy price is fixed at Rs. 7-1-11 f.o.r. If it is incorrect, it may be corrected. When you go and take a 100 bags of 2 maunds each, this difference of Rs. 400 does not matter to him. May I ask in all humility, when the Government of India have given the liberty to fix the price and when you take the stocks at a maximum price of Rs. 11,

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will it lead to co-operation between the producing population and the Government? Is it not reasonable that you should give a higher price? I plead that in future at least, in order to avoid trouble, a higher price—which the Government of India have accepted—is necessary. It is really a fundamental question; the price should be revised and enhanced. I did want to give an amendment motion, but I did not do it because of what happened last time—the other members on this side were of course there but still they won't do anything at all—and I am simply stating it here. If you go to-morrow and ask the ryot to give you the paddy, the price question must arise.

" The next question I come to is : when you procure from the surplus districts, what is the ration you are fixing for the deficit areas and towns? Is it 8 oz. or 12 oz. or 16 oz. ration? If you fix 12 or 16 oz., you will have to procure more from the surplus districts. Then what will happen is that you will make the surplus districts themselves deficit districts. You know what is happening in the trains between Masulipatam and Bezwada—how people are taking head-loads. The net result will be that people in the surplus districts will have to pay more price in the same district; and so the vital point to be decided in this case is how much are you going to procure for the deficit districts; and how many ounces are you going to give the people there; that will depend again on how much you can get out of the surplus districts.

" One other matter with regard to price was referred to by Mr. Govindachari. All the areas in the northern surplus districts have been receiving a higher price than Tanjore district. This is seen from a statement placed on the table of the House in answer to a question put yesterday. The price of first sort rice in the northern districts was Rs. 9–8–0 while it was Rs. 9–3–0 in the case of Tanjore rice, similarly, second sort Rs. 8–14–0 against Rs. 8–9–0 and third sort Rs. 8–4–0 against Rs. 7–15–0; whereas now the position is reversed; for the Circars you give Rs. 9–13–0 while to Tanjore you give only Rs. 9–9–3. Why? The Circars districts were getting more in the previous years and Tanjore district much less. (An hon. Member : ' Compensation.') I am not grudging it to Tanjore; but I am asking why you were not paying more to the Circars. As Mr. Narayana Menon pointed out, we are not grudging the giving of rice, but we are grudging the price paid. So, it is all a question of price.

" The Hon. Minister for Food must know that a terrible responsibility awaits him. In the year 1945–46 which was a calamitous year, we imported about 4 million tons of foodgrains. 1946–47 was however a good year; then we got 125,000 tons from the Government of India. And what did you give the country then? Even then you gave only 8 oz. Even in a prosperous year when there was a contribution of 1¼ lakhs of tons from the Government of India, you could give only 8 oz. I am saying this because there is going to be a failure, partially at least, of the usual quantity this year; and so, if you fix the ration in the deficit districts, at a particular quantity, you will have to tackle the

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situation and avoid giving only half a meal or a three-fourths meal instead of a full meal. But if you give more, you will be making the surplus districts deficit and making them give more and take less. Therefore, I say, in fixing the price quotas for the deficit districts, the Government will have to be very careful. They must, if necessary, make a representation to the Government of India that this is also going to be a calamitous year and that at least one lakh and more tons should be given to you in some way or other. The whole position must be placed before the Government of India and it must be definitely pointed out that we cannot get on without another lakh of tons.

"In the amendment that I wanted to make, I wanted to suggest more production. The real question to be tackled is, not how to tighten the belt; if we can help it, we can even widen the belt as much as we can. Therefore, there must be a production programme. On the last occasion, I raised several points in this respect and not a small finger has been raised to consider any of those things. Yesterday, of course, we met the Chief Engineer for Electricity. When asked what help was being given, he said nothing was being given owing to shortage of motors, pumping sets, etc. I say, immediate action should be taken by the Government if they want to avert famine conditions. You must see that electricity is given to the ryots at whatever cost. Even in the off season, as Mr. Muthuranga Mudaliyar said, such help should be given. In the Circars, something should be done for a second crop production in the West Godavari district. Mr. Govindachari said that there is still a large area available for second crop production; Government have done nothing to see to what extent help can be given and what kind of help can be given.

"The next question is one of manure. The problem was raised definitely yesterday; only 15 per cent in the quota available. Manure will increase production. Last time I suggested that you must start factories for the production of chemical fertilizers. What have you done with that suggestion? I submit, Sir, this is a serious responsibility. This is a question of supply of more manure and more production; and unless production of manure is taken up at once, you cannot solve the problem easily. Then again there is also the question of drainage in the deltas and I suggest that priority should be given to this question. As the Hon. Premier said, there is no use talking about all these things. The real question is: the Government must do something substantial for increasing production. Therefore, I appeal to the Government —not by way of a motion as I wanted to do, but by way of a speech on this occasion—to see that electricity is given freely even to the Central districts, that the drainage problem is solved in the delta districts and that more lands are brought under cultivation for second crop in the West Godavari district. It is only thus that I say the price will come down and the struggle between the haves and have-nots will considerably be lessened."

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SRI L. SUBBARAMA REDDI :—"అధ్యక్షా, మన మద్రాసు ప్రభుత్వమువారు ఇండియా గవర్నమెంటువారి అభిప్రాయము ననుసరించి కంట్రోల్సు (controls) ను, రేషనింగు (rationing) ను తొలగించుటకు నిశ్చయించుకొనినందులకు వారిని నేను అభినందించుచున్నాను.

"రైతులకు వ్యవసాయ ఖర్చులు, ఇతర వస్తువుల ఖర్చులు, జీవిత ఖర్చులు జాస్తి అగుటవలన, వారికి ఇదివరలో ప్రభుత్వమువారు ఇచ్చుచుండిన ధాన్యపు ధరలు గిట్టుబాటుగట్టలేదు. సంసార పోషణక్లిష్టమైనది వారి ఆదాయములు చాలకయున్నవి. ప్రభుత్వమువారు ఇప్పుడు ప్రకటించిన ధరలు కొంతవరకు రైతులకు సహాయపడునని నమ్ముచున్నాను.

"ఈ కొత్త ధరలు ప్రకటించడములో నెల్లూరు జిల్లాకు చాలా అన్యాయము జరిగినది. ఇదివరలో నెల్లూరు జిల్లాలో 'మొదటిపంటలు' ధాన్యమును special quality గా నిర్ణయించి, మణుగు బియ్యము ధర రూ 9-13-0 లు గాను, దక్షిణ జిల్లాలలో మిగిలిన special quality ధాన్యపు బియ్యమునకు మణుగు ధరీదు రూ. 9-7-0 గాను ఉండేది. ఇప్పుడు కొత్త ధరలను ప్రకటించినప్పుడు అన్ని రకముల బియ్యమునకు మణుగు 1 కి రూ. 2 ల చొప్పున ఎక్కువ చేసినారు. కాని ఆ ధర ప్రకటనలో నెల్లూరు special quality ని తీసివేసి నెల్లూరు బియ్యమునకు మణుగు 1 రూ. 11-1-0 లను, దక్షిణ జిల్లాలకు రూ. 11-8-3 లను నిర్ణయించినారు ఎందుకు నెల్లూరు బియ్యము ధర తగ్గించినారని అధికారులను అడుగగా ఇప్పుడు special quality ని తీసివేసేమాయని చెప్పినారు. ఇతర జిల్లాలలో వి కొద్దిగానో special quality ధాన్యమును పండించెదరుగాని, మా జిల్లాలో చాలా భాగము కొంచం ఇంచుమించుగా జిల్లాలో అన్ని ప్రాంతములలోను మొలకల ధాన్యమునే పండించెదరు. ప్రతి సంవత్సరము మా జిల్లా నుంచి సుమారు 60 వేల టన్నుల మొలకొలుకుల బియ్యమును ఎగుమతి చేయుచున్నారు. ఇప్పుడు ప్రభుత్వమువారు నిర్ణయించిన ధర ప్రకారము మణుగు 1 కి రూ. 0-12-0 చొప్పున రైతులకు తక్కువ ఇచ్చుచున్నారు. అనగా పుట్టికి సుమారు రూ. 12 ల లేడా యున్నది. దీనివల్ల మా జిల్లాకు సుమారు ఏడిలక్షల (రూ. 10,00,000) రూపాయల నష్టము వచ్చును. మా జిల్లా మొలకొలుకుల బియ్యము ఇతర జిల్లాల బియ్యమునకన్న శ్రేష్టమైనదువంటివి. మా జిల్లా బియ్యము, రామేశ్వరము, మధుర, కోయంబత్తూరు, శేలం, మలబారు మొదలైనటువంటి ప్రదేశములకు ఎగుమతి కాబడుచున్నవి. మా బియ్యము యొక్క శ్రేష్టత్వము అన్ని జిల్లాలవారికి తెలిసినటువంటి విషయమే. ఈ విషయముల నన్నింటిని గమనించియే యుద్దముకాకు ముందునుంచి కూడా మా నెల్లూరు జిల్లా బియ్యమునకు ఇతర జిల్లాల బియ్యమునకన్న హెచ్చు ధర ఇచ్చుచుండిరి. కాని ఇప్పుడు గవర్నమెంటువారు మా జిల్లా బియ్యమును (special quality) గా గురించక తక్కువ ధర ఇచ్చుటకు నిర్ణయించినందువలన మా జిల్లా రైతులకు పుట్టికి రూ. 12 ల చొప్పున నష్టము కలుగునని మనవి చేయుచున్నాను. ఈ విధముగా special quality ని తీసివేయుట సబబుగా లేదు. వర్తకులు కల్తీ చేయుదురని చెప్పి special quality ని తీసివేసి, 1st, 2nd సార్టు ధాన్యముల కిచ్చుచున్న ధరనే ఇచ్చుట సబబుగాను సమంజసముగాను లేదు. ఇప్పుడైనను గవర్నమెంటువారు జాగ్రత్తగా ఆలోచించి మా జిల్లా రైతులకు నష్టము లేకుండా చేయవలయునని special quality బియ్యమునకు హెచ్చు ధర ఇవ్వవలయునని కోరుచున్నాను. ఈ ధరలను హెచ్చించనిచో ప్రత్యేకముగా నెల్లూరు జిల్లా రైతులకు చాలా నష్టము కలుగునని మంత్రిగారికి తెలుపుచున్నాను."

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SRI A. GOPALAKRISHNAYYA :—"అధ్యక్ష, మదాను ప్రభుత్వము వారు ఈ జిల్లాలలో రేషనింగు (rationing) విధానమును రిద్దుచేసినందులకు వారిని శాఘించుచున్నాను.

"ప్రభుత్వమువారు ఈ మధ్యను ప్రకటించిన ధాన్యపు ధరల విషయం కొద్దిగా మనవిచేస్తాను. ప్రభుత్వమువారు నియమించిన Non-official Food Committee లో నేను కూడా ఒక సభ్యుడ (member)ను. ఆ కమిటీవారు ధాన్యమునకు మణుగు 1 కి 7-8-0 ల ధరను సిఫారసు చేసినారు. కాని ప్రభుత్వంవారు మణుగు 1 కి రూ 7 లు మాత్రమే నిర్ణయించారు. ఈ విధంగా లేదా ధర ఇచ్చుటకు కారణములు తెలియటలేదు తక్కువధర ఇచ్చేయడల రైతులకు గిట్టుబాటు కాదు.

"గవర్నమెంటువారు ఇప్పుడు నిర్ణయించిన ధరలవలన రైతునకు తక్కువ ధర, వర్తకునికి హెచ్చుధర యిచ్చియున్నారు. వర్తకుడు ప్రభుత్వమువారికి మణుగు 1 కి 24 పడుల బియ్యము మొప్పున అప్పగించవలయును. కాని వర్తకునకు మణుగుకు 24 పడులకు తక్కువ కాకుండా దిగుబడివస్తుంది. ఇంతేకాక unpolished బియ్యమైనట్లయితే 25, 26 పడులవరకూ కూడా దిగుబడి ఉంటుంది. ఈ విధముగా తక్కువ దిగుబడి నిర్ణయించి నందువలన వర్తకునకు ఇస్తున్న (margin) లాభమే కాకుండా బస్తాకు, 2, 3 పడుల బియ్యము ఎక్కువగా ఉంటుంది. ఈ 2, 3 పడుల బియ్యము వర్తకుని దగ్గరనుంచి Black-market లోనికి పోతోంది. Black-market లో వర్తకుడు ఈ బియ్యాన్ని పడి 1 కి రూ. 1 రూ 1-2-0 ల చొప్పున అమ్మి అపరిమితమైన లాభము సంపాదిస్తున్నాడు. కాబట్టి ఈ ధరలు నిర్ణయించు విషయమును ప్రభుత్వమారి తిరిగి పరిశీలన చేయగోరుతాను. ఇప్పుడు ప్రభుత్వము వారు నిర్ణయించిన ధరలవలన కష్టపడి పోలాన్ని దున్ని వ్యవసాయం చేసేవానికి సరి అయిన ధర కిట్టుటం లేదు సరికదా consumer కు కూడా హెచ్చుధర నిర్ణయించారు. మధ్యన లాభం వర్తకునికే పోతోంది. కాబట్టి ఈ విషయాలన్నింటిని పునఃపరిశీలన చేయవలసినదిగా Food Minister గారిని కోరుచున్నాను.

"మన దేశము పూర్తిగా వ్యవసాయ దేశం. ఈ rationing, control అనునవి పారిశ్రామిక దేశాలకు పనికి వస్తాయి కాని మన దేశానికి పనికి రావు. కాబట్టి వీటిని ఎంత త్వరలో తీసివేస్తే దేశానికి, రైతాంగానికి, consumer లకు అంత మంచిది.

"ఇంతే కాక ఈ rationing, control విధానాలవలన ప్రభుత్వంవారు తమ యొక్క సిబ్బందిని హెచ్చుచేయవలసి వచ్చింది. ఇందుచేత ప్రభుత్వమువారికి సంవత్సరానికి సుమారు 7, 8 కోట్ల రూపాయిలు ఖర్చుపడుతున్నాయి. ఇటువంటి అనవసరమైన స్కీములవల్ల ప్రజల డబ్బు చాలా వ్యర్థా అయిపోతోంది. కాబట్టి rationing, controls ను వెంటనే తీసివేయ గోరుతాను. అందువలన మిగిలేటటువంటి కోట్లాది రూపాయలతో మంచి irrigation scheme లను, manure factory లను నిర్మించిన రైతులకు చాలా ఉపయుక్తముగా ఉండును. హెచ్చు పంటలు పండించుటకు రైతులకు చాలా అవకాశములుండును. అందువలన రాష్ట్రమంతటలోను సాధ్యమైనంత త్వరలో rationing, controls తీసివేయవలసినదని Food Minister గారికి మనవి చేయుచున్నాను.

"Controls తీసివేసినయడల ధాన్యము ధరలు విపరీతముగా పెరిగిపోవునని కొందరు సభ్యులు చెప్పుచున్నారు. Controls తొలగించిన కొ తరోజులలో కొంత పెరుగుదల కనుపించినను రాను రాను 5, 6 మాసములలోగా సరసమైనటువంటి ధరలకే ధాన్యం

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దొరుకుతుంది కాని ఈ rationing conrol విధానాలవల్ల consumer లకు సరిపోయినంత బియ్యాన్ని ప్రభుత్వంవారు ఇవ్వలేక పోతున్నారు. ప్రభుత్వంవారు ఇచ్చే టుకువంటి 8 ఆఔన్సుల బియ్యం ఎవ్వరికీ సరిపోదు. మనలో ఎవ్వరైనా 8 ఔన్సుల బియ్యం మాత్రమే తింటున్నామేమో చెప్పండి. ప్రతివారు 16 ఔన్సులకు తక్కువ కాకుండా తింటూనే ఉన్నారు. ఈవిధంగా హెచ్చుగా కావలసిన బియ్యాని అందరూ officer లతో సహా blackmarket లో కొనుక్కుంటున్నారు. ఎవరు blackmarket చేస్తున్నారో, బియ్యాను ఎక్కడనుంచి వస్తున్నాయో ఆఫీసర్లం దరకు తెలుసును. కాని వారుస్వలాభం చూచుకొని blackmarket ను ప్రోత్సహిస్తున్నారు. కాబట్టి rationing ను, controls ను ఎంత త్వరలో తీసివేస్తే అంత మంచిదని, ప్రజలు చాలా సంతోషిస్తారని మనవిచేస్తున్నాను.

"బియ్యం విగుబడి విషయంలో ప్రభుత్వంవారు మరల పరిశీలించవలయునని కోరుచున్నాను. మిల్లర్లు తక్కువ దిగుబడి వచ్చినదని లెక్కలు చూపిస్తూ దొంగ మార్కెటులో బియ్యాన్ని కేరు రూపాయి చొప్పున అమ్ముతున్నారు. Surplus జిల్లా అయినటువంటి మా కృష్ణా జిల్లాలో కూడా ప్రజలు black market లో బియ్యం కొనుక్కుంటున్నారు. కూలీ నాలీ చేసుకునే టటువంటి వారికి బియ్యం దొరకటం చాలా కష్టంగా ఉన్నది. దీనికి ఆంతా కారణం రేషనింగు విధాన మే. దేశంలో కావలసినంత సరుకు ఉన్నా controls వల్ల blackmarket లోనికి పోతోంది కాని ప్రజలకు న్యాయమైనటువంటి ధరలకు బియ్యం దొరకటం లేదు.

"ఈమధ్యన నేను మా బెజవాడలో ఆంధ్ర రాష్ట్ర కాంగ్రెస్ సంఘ కార్యదర్శి అయినటువంటి శ్రీ ఓబులరెడ్డిగారిని తీసుకొని కొన్ని factory ల లోనికి వెళ్లాను. అక్కడ బియ్యం దిగుబడి ఏ విధంగా ఉన్నదో మనవిచేస్తాను. ఒక mill లో బస్తాకు 115 శేర్లు (Table Rice) దిగుబడి కనుపించింది. మరొక factoryలో మఱ్ఱాను 111 శేర్ల దిగుబడి కనుపించింది. అంటే బస్తాకు 75, 76 మఱ్ఱాను పలుల దిగుబడి ఉన్నదన్నమాట. ఎంతతక్కువ దిగుబడి ఉన్నా 108 శేర్లకు తక్కువకాకుండను. కాబట్టి ఈ దిగుబడి లెక్కలను సరిగా పరిశీలించవలసినదని, లాభాన్ని ఆన వసరంగా మధ్యవర్తి అయినటువంటి వర్తకునికి కాకుండా, పంట పండించే రైతుకుగాని, consumer కుగాని ముట్టునట్లుగా చూడవలసినదని మంత్రిగారిని కోరుచున్నాను."

* SRI S. JAYARAMA REDDI :—"Mr. President, Sir, while rising to speak on the decontrol policy of the Government, I just want to impress on the Hon. the Food Minister one or two points relating to Tinnevelly and Ramnad districts. I hope the Civil Supplies Commissioner who has recently visited the two districts might have reported well about the precarious position in those two districts. Mr. Adityan has already made sufficient reference about the serious situation in those two districts. If the Hon. Food Minister visits those places, he will know that people are migrating from those two districts to the neighbouring district of Madura. If you go to Ettiyapuram where the Bharathi Memorial Building was built recently, about ten miles from there there is a place called Aruppukottai. Between these two places on the road you will find that at least 400 families, including women and children, with loads on their head, are migrating to the Madura district. What I would like to request of the Hon. Minister for Food is, to consider before finalising his programme of decontrol

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what he is going to do with regard to this problem in these districts, where after decontrolling and derationing there is nothing left to procure unless they go to Madura or to adjoining districts and even there from the big landlords everything has been procured and so nothing is left for the poor people. Again, the north-east monsoon has failed completely and there is nothing left in the district. Of course, the Hon. Food Minister says there will be district movement and food stuffs would be circulating in the district itself. But, how are you going to help people in these two districts unless they go to some other district. I want the Hon. the Food Minister to elucidate this. I have nothing more to say, Sir."

DR. SIR A. LAKSHMANASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" Sir, I just wanted to clear some doubts rather than give any views of my own on such an intricate and important problem. I feel that in a matter like this we ought to leave it to the Government to decide what is the best, provided they realize their responsibility ultimately and whether they have controls or decontrols, it is their responsibility to see that the people of the province are properly fed. I do not think that Hon. Dr. Rajan, although he gave the impression that Government was going to free themselves from responsibility, meant that they were going to free themselves from their responsibility of seeing to it that proper arrangements are still available to the people and that they should get the food required for their sustenance. No civilized Government can afford to ignore that fundamental question and that fundamental duty. The whole problem lies in this. At present controls have worked very inefficiently; they have been such a great burden on everybody, rich and the poor alike and there has been a universal feeling that people have not gained as much as they should have gained on account of these controls. I know the hardships of control and I can well imagine what greater hardship the poor labourer or the wage-earner will have to suffer, waiting at ration shops for hours together foregoing the privilege of going to work in time or probably sending somebody else to wait for him in the ration shops. If, therefore, there is this universal feeling, it is not because that controls are bad in themselves, but they have worked inefficiently in some cases most unfortunately. Now, the whole position is this. Are there any scientific data for the Government to know, whether after the removal of controls, there will be a proper and equitable distribution of foodstuffs to the people of this province? Have they got any data to feel that after decontrol, the question of supply to the common man, the poor workman, will not be jeopardised to the extent to which it is likely to be jeopardised. I am not, of course, thinking of those who can afford—and even those who can afford, they can do so only for some time—because for some time at any rate a large amount of money is required to get what they need. One of my Friends suggested that it is possible that for a year or for a few months the prices may shoot up and then they will settle down. It is all right for him and for me to contemplate such a possibility, but what about the poor worker? I know what

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happened after the last Great War. The bitter riots that took place in Conjeeveram and Chingleput are still fresh in my memory. Are they going to be repeated in our province? That is the thing which the Government have to consider. Two fundamental things have been adopted in all countries which removed controls. I do not agree with the statement made by one hon. Member that in Britain controls have been removed. They have not been removed. As a matter of fact, controls are imposed, not merely as a war measure, but because from the very nature of things, when the supply and demand do not cancel each other, some kind of control has to be established. So, the first thing they did was, for the Government to secure a large amount of foodstuffs and stock them so as to be available to the people when the necessity arises. Secondly, they opened fair price shops. In this country some methods of checking uncontrolled soaring up of prices by those who are unfortunately inclined, is necessary. To-day most of the merchants are inclined to allow prices to soar up—it is rather a habit and I do not think there is any use blaming this person or that—and commercial morality is not what it was before the war in this country and it ought not to be so in our own country. We know members of the mercantile community who are represented on the various Chambers of Commerce, presenting learned and eloquent addresses to the hon. Members of the Central and Provincial Governments, but the very members of the Chambers of Commerce have not been able to introduce any form of commercial morality worth mentioning in regard to those essential commodities that ought to be made available.

" Sir, I mentioned some time ago that this dearness allowance was a misfortune to the Government servants. I do not consider that they have been in any way benefited by that. The more you increase the dearness allowance, based on some wonderful statistical data prepared by somebody sitting in an office as to the shooting up of prices, the more you allow the amount of the small dearness allowance to go into the hands of the blackmarketeer. Prices of all commodities have stepped up with increased dearness allowance given by the Government. What they ought really to have done was, instead of giving the dearness allowance in cash, it should have been given in the shape of the produce they need, as it has been given by the Government of India for their railway employees. If Government servants in this and other places had been treated like this, not only would they have got all they wanted, but their prices would not have soared up to the extent they have.

" Then, Sir, the Hon. Minister said that he proposed to get procurement from the surplus districts and to give it to the deficit districts. But, I would like him to tell us on what basis this procurement is going to be calculated? What is the criterion he has set up for the needs of the people of the districts concerned? Is it based on the present 8 oz. per person or based on a higher figure? Or, is he going to calculate on an average? After all, if you take the average, may we not flounder, as the person who

wanted to cross a river calculated the average depth of the river to be 5 feet, i.e., less than his height, and lost himself before he could reach the middle of the river. So, Sir, average is a dangerous thing. If you take the average for a district, there is every likelihood of procurement failing, because all the big landholders, bigger officials and all those who are generally rich will have a far greater quantity stocked in their own places. So procurement will result in failure, and there is no question about it. Sir, we have listened enough to the debate in this House to know how feelings may be roused between one district and another. Fortunately, I belong neither to the Tanjore district, nor the Kistna or Godavari district. But, I can well understand how tempers will be roused and how Government will be faced with a serious difficulty.

"There is one other point. In these days and especially in regard to the food question, a great deal of emotion is very justly elucidated. Harrowing tales of the situation have been told by those members hailing from this district or that district and Government will be shaken to its foundation and they will probably have rushed foodstuffs hither and thither without knowing where exactly they are needed. There is great danger in this not merely because people come to this impression—but quite honestly I say, things are very bad—but because there is likelihood of things being what they are, many things will be more or less magnified, imaginary things may be believed and current rumours in this country have a tendency to grow in volume and the position of the Government will be extremely difficult. I want to sound that note of warning. I wish the Government have thought about it. I would therefore suggest that while it will be a measure which we all view with great sympathy and to the extent to which we can, we want to give as wide a publicity as possible to the well-intentioned policy of the Government in regard to decontrol, I would suggest to the Government that they should set up an agency to issue periodical reports from every district once a fortnight as to the position of foodgrains in those districts and as to the incidence of any famine or any incidence of any soaring up of prices, so that people may be in a position to know accurately by persons responsible and reasonable—not by persons giving any statements that will please the authorities—but by persons who will give statements that will be actually in conformity with facts. I would suggest to the Government that they should set up an Information Bureau of that nature immediately, so that from time to time full details will be placed not merely before this House but before the people in general. I would like to say that while every sympathy has to be shown to the Government in their very difficult task, I do not think it is at all unreasonable for us to expect that they will insist upon the Government of India shouldering its own responsibility in regard to the procurement policy in all the Provinces. There are various rumours afloat. I have no doubt, some of these rumours are grossly imaginary; but there is a feeling in the mind of the common man that the policy of the Government of India has been dictated by those who have

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a voice in controlling that policy, by those who have a certain amount of influence on account of their position in the mercantile world—the big purse—perhaps that may be a very unfortunate impression, but let me tell you frankly that it is the impression to-day that the Government of India's policy has been controlled by 'Big Purse'. I think my hon. Friend Mr. Farookhi is quite right when he quoted that beautiful couplet. We are on the brink of a very grave crisis. Let us not minimize that. Let Government realize it and let Government face the facts and while we will certainly not do anything against their policy of decontrol, we are not as easy in our minds that all things will go well. Therefore, we give this additional caution that they should watch this from time to time, from day to day and issue bulletins every fortnight and if necessity arises, to take immediate steps to adopt the control policy much more efficiently than they have done in the past."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN:—"Mr. President, Sir, I am very thankful to the hon. Members of this House who have given their close attention not only to the debate but to the facts and figures that have been placed before them by the Government. It is indeed very kind of them to have made their criticisms as they have done. I, for my part, have listened to every statement that has been made and I shall, as far as it lies in me, take note of them in the very difficult times that are ahead of us. In doing so, while, as I have already stated, we have absolutely no other purpose except to serve the Government through a very difficult situation, it is not for me to quarrel with the Government of India or to state that I am going to overrule the Government of India and try to act on my own and to make a sort of attempt to look very brave in the existing situation. The fact is that we are working with the Government of India and we have got to work with the Government of India. I want to make this very clear that the Government of India have at no time renounced their responsibility to guide this country through a crisis, and it is very creditable of them to have done so as they have done so far. So, we have to stand up and deal with the situation as it arises. My hon. friend said that we have not behaved like Mysore or some other State. He knows as well as I do that we cannot afford to behave as Mysore. I am sure Mysore will be falling in line in the general scheme adopted by the Government of India, if they have not done so till now. Let it be remembered that the representatives of all the states including Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin have all been there when discussing the question of decontrol last month. The position of Cochin and Travancore has been very bad. It must also be remembered that it is only due to the Government of India's efforts that Mysore has been able to tide over the crisis. It may be that they would not get 14 or 12 oz. but they were just getting enough to keep them away from starvation and they were just getting enough sustenance. (Interruption.) What I am thinking is about the food position in our own province. Leaving aside the threat of famine, the fact remains—I have stated

it in the other House and I repeat it here—that at no time during the last year or the previous year was the average consumption of foodgrains only 8 oz. as has been referred to. I have worked up the average and the average comes to 11·5 oz. I do not say that it is a mightily big contribution to solve the food problem, but this average is based on facts and the average ration has been 11;5 oz. That is the first point.

"The next point that I would like to say is this. At the rate of 12 oz., at the rate of 10 oz. and at the rate of 8 oz., our production has always been a surplus. That is a point which I would like to mention. My main contention is that we are not in such a desperate mood as it has been pictured by some of the speakers in this House but that we are in a position to manage even without any help—we may not be able to manage for a number of years, I quite agree—but, I do say that we are not in such a state of despair as to make us feel that we are lost or that we are being lost. It is not so. Then, mention has been made about those districts which are threatened with famine. We are having enough food and we are rushing them to those areas. My hon. Friend, Mr. Adityan may rest content that we are not leaving any measures undone or ill-done to relieve the situation. The moment we receive information, the Civil Supplies Commissioner rushes large quantities of these foodstuffs to those areas threatened with famine and relief measures are immediately adopted.

"Then, Sir, there was the question of labour population. This labour population migrated because on account of lack of rain, they had no work. Even if people were willing to work, they could not get these foodgrains. So they migrated to places like Cholavandan which is a big delta area where plenty of crops are grown and where the labour population expected foodgrains in return for their work, and it is not as if that this migration is premeditated and that people rush away in large numbers and that the Government cannot prevent it."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—"Government could not rush food in time."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—"It is not like rushing packets of foodgrains. What the Government did was to see that the allotments of rations in the districts of Tinnevelly and Ramnad were made available according to the figures. We came to know that the stocks there would last for about 8 days and that was the last report. Government have got a fortnight'st stock today and we wanted to do everything to rush up stocks to that place."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN :—"If that is so, why should 400 labourers migrate."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—"The hon. Member must go and ask those people. I am making a statement and the hon. Member should listen to what I am saying and if, after listening to my statement, hon. Member raises any question, I will answer him. I am making a statement with regard to the Government's position

in meeting a particular situation in the Province as a whole and if the hon. Member has got any doubts about any particular district, he can put questions afterwards. That is the correct procedure. The migration of labour depends upon so many other factors also which I cannot answer. In spite of the enthusiasm that he has displayed for the people in the Tinnevelly district, I must inform my hon. Friend that we hold ourselves more responsible to the people of Tinnevelly than he does.

" One thing and that is that food cannot be rushed when we do not have stocks. So we have to see that we get stocks to meet all these demands and therefore we are doing it. I am making this reply to assure this House of the various steps that we have taken before we got into this decontrol. We have taken all facts into consideration before we introduced this. Some friends said that we had made some invidious distinction with regard to some particular districts. It is all wrong because I have got facts and figures to show that none of these districts were shown any favourtism so far.

" The old village side price was :—in Guntur and Nellore—Special sort Rs. 6, first sort Rs. 5–7–0, second sort, Rs. 5 and third sort Rs. 4–10–0. In Tanjore it was Rs. 5–12–0 for special sort, first sort Rs. 5–5–0, second sort Rs. 4–14–6 and third sort Rs. 4–4–0.

" You will find from these figures that there is absolutely no foundation for the fears of the hon. Members. In Tanjore we wanted to give less naturally because the contents of rice to the quantum of paddy procured is less while in the Circars the rice is better and so better prices were given. We do not treat anybody with any distinction. I agree with my Nellore friends that instead of four classifications we have only two according to the present rate. The ordinary people do not know which is special class and which is second class and which is third class. Generally merchants dupe them and make lot of money. This has a demoralizing effect. The other day it was reported that in Choolai the merchants were giving all sorts of inferior rice as special rice and so on and they were cheating the poor consumers. Four to seven annas were pilfered from every individual in this way and you can understand how much money the merchants would have made by this process. These things happened because the people could not know which was first class rice and which was the other varieties. Therefore we have now only introduced two classifications. There is no discrimination shown to any district whatsoever.

" Then the question was asked as to what amount of paddy we were going to leave with these people from whom we take away paddy. We can assure our friends that we shall not take any grain without providing the fullest for the producer whatever may be the stock available. We have till now given one pound. This is the margin we have left. According to the present procurement rules it is our intention not only to give 16 oz. but even more than that, inasmuch as he would require for his own food, for his

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seeds and for his dependents. If after giving all these things there is surplus we will pay a certain price to him and take them away. That is all we propose to do. You may rest content that no producer in any of the districts will be deprived of the minimum of such quantity of paddy as will be required by him to maintain himself and his dependents. That is exactly what we propose to do under the present circumstances.

" Then again with regard to Mr. R. Suryanarayana Rao's question about Ceded districts I have received reports and the latest reports received by the Board of Revenue with regard to the crop situation and conditions of crop in various districts say that the crops are fairly satisfactory and they expect a surplus in millets. We base all our actions on these reports and we are guided by them. It is not as if we are doing everything without taking the facts into consideration. We are launching upon the present programme because we have got sufficient facts and figures on which we can base our action.

" Then there was the question of fair price shops. The idea sounds good. It shall be instituted if it becomes necessary to do so. When we have surplus on hand such shops can be started wherever necessary.

" I may assure my hon. friends that no effort on our part will be lacking to get the support of the Government of India. We have always pressed for it and I may say the Government of India has treated us fairly well and all this while they have been helping us beyond which nobody could do more. They have helped us with finances, with food and with every suggestion that they could possibly give. This Provincial Government has to stand by the Central Government in so far as we are helped in so many ways by the Government of India and it would be unfair to tell them that we would not do this or that and that we would not be listening to them. Be it for famine, for water, for irrigation or for any problems with which we may be faced, it is the Government of India that is going to give us the necessary help and I am sure they will give it and we shall certainly make every endeavour to see that such help is secured so far as Governmental representation and influence can prevail. The position is different with regard to states because we get much better help from the Government of India than from the States. I am glad hon. Members feel that we are taking a very great step and am thankful for the caution that has been given by hon. members that we should go about it with care and caution. On my part, I would request the House to see that in what we do we require the sympathetic help and co-operation, not only individual co-operation but the co-operation and help of the country at large and the man-in-the-street, and I want, to understand that we are launching on a thing which requires the best endeavours of the Government and the people.

" The question has been raised about weekly returns regarding the food situation. In that connection, we have already given instructions and so we have already acted upon it.

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"I request hon. Members to help us with their suggestions and aid us in the task ahead, so that we may be able to pilot through the food question. Already, I have said that if we have got to go back, we shall go back; but that is only a caution and it may not be necessary for us to go back. I feel that we shall be able to tide over this situation. We have heard in the press that millions of tons of wheat have been promised to the country and the Government of India are purchasing them from 1947–48; I expect more or less a regular inflow of wheat into this country and large quantities out of that will be made available to this Province and that will certainly tide us over any amount of difficulty we may be faced with. With the prospects of such large purchases on behalf of the Government of India, I do not feel, we need apprehend any difficulty as my friends may feel and we may expect a hopeful and successful year next year so far as food matters go."

SRI T. PURUSHOTTAM:—"In calculating the surplus in the districts, Government adopted the procedure of adopting 4½ to 5 bags per acre of wet land but with regard to dry lands, they have not taken into account expenses in kind but only those in cash. May I know what will be the attitude Government will adopt in the future in the Circar districts. A tenant has to pay to the ryot or to the coolie in kind but not in cash. I wish to know the attitude of Government in future regarding payment of expenses towards cultivation."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN:—"So far as I could see, I do not think we shall impinge upon dry areas for any foodgrains."

SRI T. PURUSHOTTAM:—"Dry and wet areas?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN:—"We will limit our requirements to the rice-producing areas and this question of mixed cultivation area does not arise."

SRI A. JEYARAM REDDI:—"There are large stocks which have been procured according to the old rules; may I know what Government propose to do with such stocks?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN:—"We will take it into our account and have it properly distributed; we are not going to return it."

K. UPPI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"The food position in Malabar at the time I left was very bad. Most of the societies dealing in rice have not got enough stocks to last them even for week. These troubles started with rationing when the societies were entrusted with this work. I wish to know what steps are being taken."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN:—"I assure the hon. Member that we have got a month's stock of rice in Malabar. It may be true that some shops may not have just as much as others. I have also assured our friends that in the event of stocks going down we shall see that stocks are rushed to this place. It is an area which we are going to feed and he need not be worried. As I said, in some shops it may be less and suitable adjustments will be made in so far as there is on an average a month's stock."

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ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" May I know what they are going to do with regard to the price of sugar? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I am not worried about sugar; it is a different matter."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" May I know the measures that will be adopted by Government in the matter of procurement of the surpluses in the surplus districts; is it voluntary or will they procure by making use of the requisitioning methods? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" We will use all methods."

SRI M. D. T. KUMARASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" Regarding the districts contiguous to the Travancore State, unless proper precautions are taken all the paddy available in such districts will be smuggled into the State. May I request information regarding the steps taken in this behalf? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Regarding the possibility of food going into the State, it is nothing new and so we shall take all necessary steps to put a stop to it.

" Only one more thing I would like to mention and that is that of the total production, in spite of all the severity of procurement, only 31 per cent has been procured all these years; in no year did it exceed that figure. The balance of nearly 70 per cent of production has been left in the country to be used or misused, hoarded or black-marketed. In spite of all that has been done, we have not taken more than 31 per cent of the entire production."

The House adjourned to meet again the next day.

TRUTH ALONE TRIUMPHS

தமிழ்நாடு சட்டமன்ற பேரவை
TAMIL NADU LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
வாய்மையே வெல்லும்
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